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THE  
SPIRITUAL RETREAT  
OF  
FATHER COLOMBIERE, S.J.  
WITH PREFACE  
BY RT. REV. DR. MANNING



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THE  
SPIRITUAL RETREAT

OF THE

REV. FATHER COLOMBIÈRE,  
*Of the Society of Jesus.*

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

WITH PREFACE BY THE RIGHT REV. DR. MANNING.



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## P R E F A C E .

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THE Spiritual Retreat of P. Colombière is one of those books in which the Spirit of God seems to speak in every word. The simplicity, intensity, and reality of its thoughts and language is like that of the New Testament; and no one can read it, without feeling himself to be admitted to hear, how God speaks to and through a soul entirely possessed by Himself. Short as it is, it would be enough to lead anyone who would take it as a rule, into the highest perfection. Few as the words are, like the filings of gold, they are all gold, and like sparks, they have the whole nature of fire.

P. Colombière was born in 1641, and died in 1682. It is needless to enter here into the detail of his life; but two facts are too interesting to us to be passed over. The first, that he laboured in England for two years, in the reign of Charles II., and was confessor to the Princess Mary of Modena, wife of the Duke of York, afterwards James II.; the other, that God chose him to be the director and support of the Ven. Mother Margaret Mary Alacoque, so that he shares with her in the special glory and reward, of those who have taught us to honour and adore the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

H. E. M.

ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS, BAYSWATER,  
*Feast of S. Ignatius, 1863.*

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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IN explanation of the title of this book, the reader must be informed that before their solemn profession, the Jesuits are accustomed to pass a third year in the exercises of the Noviciate. They make this second Noviciate at about the age of thirty, when they are fully capable of reflecting, maturely and solidly, upon all their engagements. And in order that they may be more deeply impressed with the indispensable obligation which they contract to sanctify their souls, and to become imbued with the spirit of the Society to which they have devoted themselves, St. Ignatius directed that they

should make a Retreat of thirty days, at the commencement of this last probation. They could scarcely fail, he thought, to come to a knowledge of themselves during such a prolonged exercise of prayer ; they would learn to conceive a just idea of perfection, and could not but be touched with a desire of fulfilling all their duties. Those who have a great love of God, fail not then to form a plan of life worthy of their vocation, and to make resolutions which lead them to sanctity.

F. la Colombière derived from this Retreat all the benefit which might be looked for in a character like his. He brought to it earnest desires for the highest perfection ; he longed for this blessed time as a means of detaching himself for ever from creatures ; and this, in fact, he did. We have only to

read the vow which is inserted in the Preface to the first volume of his sermons, to judge of the fruit of his spiritual exercises.

But how did he set to work to carry out his design ? We shall be surprised in reading this book, to see the exactness with which he noted down all his thoughts —all the movements of his heart. God permitted, for the glory of His servant, that he should write himself the details here published of his prayers, and the lights which he received in them. We cannot doubt that the reader will be delighted with the sincerity, purity, and elevation of his soul ; we desire also that he may learn from this work how we ought to respond to God when He vouchsafes to speak to us by His grace, and to require our services.



It has been thought desirable also to add to this Preface a kind of instruction, which F. la Colombière drew up, as a preparation for the spiritual exercises for the young Jesuits of the College of Lyons, when studying philosophy there after their Noviciate. Their training being entrusted to him after his return from England, he directed the spiritual exercises made by them at the close of the year ; and to enable them to derive the fruit which the Society proposes to itself from this holy practice, he gave them the following counsels, which may be very useful, and are even necessary for all those engaged in similar Retreats. And, besides learning the graces communicated by God to F. la Colombière during his Retreat, it will be profitable to know in what dispositions he entered upon it.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR RETREATS.

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1st. The spiritual exercises ought to be performed only at certain times, when the soul, being attracted to God and solitude by a disgust for the things of the world, or by some extraordinary light or impulse which leads to reformation or sanctification, seeks for means to satisfy this attraction, or when moved by a view of her sins she conceives a sincere desire to do penance.

2nd. We must, then, enter into Retreat, to give ourselves time to examine what is passing within us, what the grace which moves us requires of us, and how we may satisfy its claims.

3rd. It is a very good disposition for entering into solitude to form a design to change our life, and to sanctify our souls. But for those who have not made this resolution, I think that they ought to enter upon these exercises, in order seriously to consider the state of their souls, to examine calmly whether they are in the way of salvation—whether, living as they do, they are risking nothing for eternity—whether they have any change to make—or whether they may live in peace, and follow the course on which they have entered.

4th. To give their whole mind to this examination, and admit no other thoughts of whatever kind. It is but just to give to God and our own soul, all the attention required of us by the most momentous affair which we have to transact in this life.

5th. Perfect solitude.

6th. Purity of heart, and perfect exactness in keeping all the rules and all the additions. It is but for eight days. A slight fault may interpose a serious obstacle to the lights of Heaven, and cause God to withdraw from us.

7th. Great indifference to consolation. Not to look for it, but to prepare ourselves for all kinds of weariness, dryness, and desolation. We deserve them all ; and if God sees fit to send them to us, it will be eight days' exercise of patience and penance.

8th. If we have not resolved to become saints by these exercises, we must, at least, be in a disposition to receive the graces which it may please God to vouchsafe to us, and not to resist the good impulses which the Holy Ghost, in His infinite mercy, may grant us. My

God ! I feel no desire for this high perfection—perhaps I even feel a shrinking from it ; but if, by Thy divine goodness, Thou wilt vouchsafe to change me—to give me greater courage—to snatch me, in spite of myself, from the world, I hope that I shall not resist Thee. Thou knowest by what means I can overcome myself. These means are in Thy hands ; Thou canst dispose of them. The perfect life affrights me ; Thou canst cure me of this vain fear, and make me love all which I now shrink from. Thou canst do this, and Thou alone.

9th. Great confidence in God. He sought me when I fled from Him, in the midst of the world and its occupations. He will not abandon me when I come to seek Him in Retreat, or when, at least, I cease to fly from Him.

10th. Great humility in making ourselves known to our director, though we have to say only that we feel nothing, see nothing, are drawn to nothing good. In keeping to the points which he gives, and the reading which he prescribes, even when we think that something else would be better for us. This simplicity is very meritorious, and draws down many blessings on the soul.

11th. On the day preceding the Retreat, to excite in ourselves a desire of solitude—*Quis dabit mihi pennas?* Who will give me wings?—and a desire of perfection. *Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur.*

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled.”



# SPIRITUAL RETREAT

OF THE

## REV. F. CLAUDE DE LA COLOMBIÈRE,

Of the Company of Jesus.

*In which are set down the Graces and Particular Lights which God communicated to him during a Spiritual Retreat of Thirty Days.*

---

I BEGAN my Retreat, as it seems to me, with a determined will to follow, by God's grace, all the movements of the Holy Spirit, and without any attachment which could make me fear to belong unreservedly to God; resolved to suffer for Him all the aridities and interior desolations which might befall me, and which I have but too well merited by my abuse of the lights and consolations which I have received in times past. I proposed to myself:—

1st. To perform these exercises as if they were to be my last, and as if I were to die immediately afterwards.

2nd. To be scrupulously faithful and sincere, and to overcome the pride which makes me shrink from disclosing my interior.

3rd. To place no dependence on myself or

my own efforts, and for this reason to read no spiritual book of my own choosing, although I feel the strongest desire for some which treat admirably of the spiritual life, such as those of St. Teresa, *The Interior Christian*, &c. I felt that God would afford me in the points given me by the spiritual father, and in the books chosen for me by him, matter for all that he designs me to learn or experience in this Retreat. I feel extremely happy in this detachment, and I thank God for having inspired me to make Him this, the greatest sacrifice which I could offer Him on this occasion.

I felt great shame at the thought that, when God had given me so high a destiny as to love Him, I have spent so large a portion of my life, not only without loving Him, but even in offending Him. I felt a deep admiration of the patience and infinite mercy of this great God, who, beholding my contempt of this glorious end of my being, and thus seeing me to be useless and even mischievous in His creation, yet was not weary of bearing with me, of waiting till it should please me to remember why I had been placed there, and from time to time of reminding me

of it. I felt no difficulty in promising Him for the future to live only to serve and glorify Him.

All occupations, all places, all states, wherein the body can exist, health, sickness, life, and death, are, by the grace of God, indifferent to me. I seem even to feel a certain kind of envy of those whom blindness, or some other habitual infirmity, separates from all intercourse with the world, obliging them to live as if already dead. I know not whether it is the prospect of the conflicts which I foresee to await me in life which gives an attraction to such a state, in which I should, perhaps, live in greater repose and in a detachment from creatures which would cost me far less than in active life. It is easy to understand that when we wish to belong to God at whatever cost, we desire the strongest means of becoming His, if only they be the surest. In the ardent desire which God gives me to love Him alone, and to preserve my heart free from all attachment to creatures, perpetual imprisonment upon some false accusation would seem to me an incomparable blessing; and I do not think, by God's grace, that I should ever grow weary of it.

I do not feel any very great zeal for labouring for the salvation of my neighbour. When I consider our second Rule, it seems to me that I had more formerly. I do not know whether I am deceiving myself, but I believe that what has cooled my zeal on this point, is the fear lest I should seek myself in these employments; for it seems to me that nowhere does nature more subtilely intrude, than in labours for other souls, especially when they are successful, as for the glory of God we must desire them to be. It needs great grace and great strength to resist the fascination we feel in changing the hearts of others, and in witnessing the confidence reposed in us by those whom we have touched.

Sin must needs be a horrible thing, since it compelled God to condemn creatures so lovely and so perfect as the angels. What, then, is Thy mercy, O my God, which has borne with me after so many crimes; with me, who am but a morsel of dust, which has called me back to Thee, not willing that I should perish! How great must be Thy love to counterbalance—to overcome the fearful aversion of Thy nature to sin! This consider-

ation does, indeed, pierce my heart, and fill it with a most tender love of God.

The shame arising from the consideration of my sins was followed by a sweet thought that here was ample matter for the display of God's mercy, and a firm hope that He will glorify Himself in my forgiveness. *Reposita est hæc spes in sinu meo.*—"This hope is rooted so firmly in my heart" that, by the grace of God, I would sooner part with my life than let it go. I then threw myself into the arms of the Blessed Virgin; she seemed to receive me with wonderful goodness and sweetness, which touched me the more sensibly, because I feel that I have served her very ill hitherto. But I entered this Retreat with a firm purpose to neglect no means this year of acquiring a fervent love of her. I determined to draw out a plan of devotion to her, which I will try to pursue all my life long; and I feel great consolation in the thought that I shall have leisure to execute this design, and that by her help I shall succeed in it. Our Lady having thus graciously received me, seemed to present me to her Son, who, for her sake, looked benignly upon me, and opened His Sacred

Heart to me, as if I had been the most innocent of men.

Before I made the meditations upon death, I had a conversation which caused me some uneasiness, arising, on the one hand, from the fear of having gratified my vanity, and on the other, from the apprehension lest what I had said should prove a source of confusion to me. Having entered the oratory full of these thoughts, I was nearly half an hour before I could master them, and regain the calmness of mind which they had disturbed. But at last, having thrown myself on the mercy of God for the fault I had committed, and on the other hand, accepted all the confusion which it might bring upon me, and having resolved even to anticipate it, and to go forth to meet it, I felt at the moment so great a calm in my soul, that I seemed to have found God, whom I was seeking, whence I felt the sweetest joy I had ever tasted in my life. From that moment I have felt myself greatly strengthened against human respect and fear of man's judgment, and enabled to overcome my former repugnance to disclosing my weakness.

Next, when considering the state to which

death reduces us with regard to all created things, I thought that this would give me little trouble, inasmuch as I feel no attachment to anything whatever. I then asked myself—Why, since I should have no difficulty in dying at once, and thus being for ever deprived of everything which could redound to my honour or pleasure in this life, should I not resolve to live henceforth as if I were actually dead. I made answer to myself, that I should feel no pain in separating myself really from all things, so as to pass the rest of my life in a tomb or in a prison, loaded with hardships and ignominy. But I foresee that it will cost me a far different kind of warfare to live in a perfect disengagement of heart in the midst of the world, where our work calls us to labour. I have resolved, however, to do it by the grace of God, who alone can work this miracle in me.

Lastly, meditating upon what gives its sting to death, namely, past sins and future punishment, a remedy offered itself to my mind, which I embraced with all my heart and with great consolation to my soul. It was this—to make, as it were, one load of all the sins known and unknown which will

present themselves to my memory in the last hour of my life, and to cast down this load at our Saviour's feet, to be consumed in the flames of His mercy. The greater the number, and the more enormous they appear to me, so much the more willingly shall I offer them to Him to be consumed; because what I ask will be the more worthy of His mercy. It seems to me I could do nothing more reasonable or more to the glory of God, and from the idea which I have conceived of His goodness, it will not be difficult to me; for I feel drawn to it with my whole being. As for purgatory, for I think I should wrong the mercy of God in fearing hell, although I may have deserved it more than the evil spirits themselves—as for purgatory, I do not fear it; I would, indeed, that I had not deserved it, for I have done so by displeasing God; but since this cannot be undone, I shall rejoice in satisfying His justice to the most rigorous extent that can be conceived, and even until the day of judgment. I know that the sufferings of purgatory are terrible, but I know that they are for God's honor, and cannot hurt the soul; that there we shall be secure from ever oppo-

sing God's will, that we shall never murmur at His justice, but love even its severity, that we shall wait patiently till it shall be entirely satisfied. I have therefore given, with all my heart, to the souls in purgatory, all that I can gain here, and have even yielded to others all the suffrages that will be offered for me after my death, in order that God may be glorified in paradise, by souls who deserve a higher place in glory than myself.

I have also been profoundly convinced in this first week, that no man can satisfy the justice of God for the smallest offence, and this has been a source of joy to me.

1st. Because it relieves me from the uneasiness which I should always feel, as to whether I had done penance enough for my sins; for I should perpetually be saying to myself: "No, you have not done enough." To efface the guilt of sins is not in your power; it requires the blood of God Himself to wash it out; to pay the penalty requires an eternity of suffering on your part, or the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Now this blood and these sufferings exist.

2nd. Nevertheless, we must not give up

doing penance in reparation of the sins of our life; but it must be done without disquiet, for the worst which can happen to us when we have a good will and act under obedience, is to be a long time in purgatory; and we may say, I think, in a good sense, that this is not a very great evil. Further, I love better to owe my pardon to the mercy of God rather than to my own labour; because it is more to His glory, and makes Him more lovely in my sight. I am very glad that my penances are regulated for me; it preserves me from either vanity or indiscretion, or from being disquieted by the fear which I should have felt of deceiving myself; and I should certainly have fallen into one of these snares, perhaps into all three.

In the day of judgment, it will be a great humiliation to those vain persons who have taken delight in being honored and esteemed by men, and who have endeavoured to distinguish themselves in all things, to find that there is then no difference made between them and the common herd, and that they are looked upon with the greatest contempt by those who, in their lifetime, showed them

most respect. On the contrary, what joy for those humble souls who, for the love of God, have chosen an obscure and common life in this world, to find themselves chosen and separated from the multitude, to stand out conspicuous in the light of that great day, without a shadow of danger to their virtue !

I find that a season of dryness and desolation is the time above all to gain merit. A soul seeking God alone, bears this suffering without anxiety, and easily rises above all that passes in the imagination and in the inferior part of the soul, where consolations, for the most part, are to be found. Such a soul, seeking God alone, ceases not to love God, to humble herself, and to accept this state of suffering, even were it to last for ever. Nothing is more to be suspected than the sweetness of consolation, and nothing is more dangerous. Sometimes the soul becomes attached to it, and then, when it is passed and gone, there remains no fervor for what is good, but the very contrary. It is to me a solid consolation to believe that, in the midst of dryness, and even of temptations, my heart is free ; that it is only by my heart that I can

merit or forfeit merit, and that I can neither please nor displease God by things which are not in my power, such as natural inclinations and troublesome thoughts, which will suggest themselves to the mind however much against our will. In trials like these, I say to God: Oh, my God! let the devil even take for himself that which I cannot keep from him, that over which I have no control. As to my heart, which of Thy goodness Thou hast given me, he shall never have a share in it; it is Thine, Thou knowest it, Thou seest it, Thou canst take it. It rests with Thee to do what Thou wilt with it. The man to whom God has given a real desire to serve Him, need be troubled at nothing: *Pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.*—“Peace to men of good will.” Therefore, I hope, with God’s grace, to make acts of true contrition; because I see clearly the interested motives which may move us to grieve for our sins, and with my whole will, and with my entire deliberation, I renounce them all. I am persuaded that God is infinitely good, that He alone deserves to be regarded, and that it is just we should sacrifice all that concerns ourselves,

and think only of His glory. Either this is possible, or it is not. If it were impossible, God would neither command nor counsel me to do it; if it be possible, then by His grace I will do it, for I desire sincerely and in good faith to do all that is in my power.

I do not think I have ever been so comforted as in the meditation on the Blessed Sacrament, which is the last of the first week. From the first moment of being in the oratory, and of considering this mystery, I felt myself penetrated with the most sweet emotions of wonder and gratitude for the great goodness which God has shown us in this mystery. It is true that I have received such great favors therein, and have felt so perceptibly the effect of this bread of angels, that I could not think of it without feeling touched with the deepest gratitude. I have never before felt such confidence that I should persevere in my desire to belong to God alone, notwithstanding the fearful difficulties which seem to be before me in the course of my life. I will say Mass every day; this is my life, my only resource; Jesus Christ can do but little if He cannot sustain me from



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one day to another. He will not fail to reproach me for my slackness, so soon as I begin to give way to it. He will give me every day fresh counsels, renewed strength; He will teach me, He will console me, and He will grant me, or obtain for me, through His Sacrifice, all the graces which I shall ask of Him.

If I do not see Him present, I feel His presence; and it seems to me that I am like those blind men who threw themselves at His feet, and who did not doubt that they touched him, although they saw Him not. I think that this meditation has increased my faith in this mystery. I was much touched in considering what thoughts Jesus Christ might have concerning me, whilst I hold Him in my hands, the disposition of His heart, His desires, His intentions. What sweetness, what graces would a really pure and detached soul receive in this Sacrament!

On the seventh day, in the morning, I found myself attacked with misgivings as to the plan of life I mean to adopt for the future, and I saw immense difficulties in it. To lead a holy life in any other way would

seem easy, and the more austere, solitary, unknown, and separate from all intercourse with others it might be, the more sweet would it seem to me. As for those things which usually alarm human nature, such as prisons, continual sickness, and even death itself—all appear to me sweet in comparison with that eternal war which I must wage with myself; with that watchfulness against the attacks of the world, and of self-love; with that living death in the midst of the world.

When I think of all this, it seems to me that my life will be very tedious and death never come soon enough. I understand these words of St. Augustine: *Patienter vivit et delectabiliter moritur*.—"He lives patiently and dies with delight." But I also understood that the life chosen by Jesus Christ is assuredly the most perfect of all, and that it is impossible to conceive a higher idea of sanctity than the life of a perfect Jesuit. All these considerations have had this good effect on me, to impress me with a thorough conviction, that if I have hitherto practised any degree of detachment, however imperfect, it has not been of my own strength, and that

for the future God must put His own hand to the work, if He would make anything good of me; for I feel how powerless I am to do anything good without His grace.

I now see that there are many steps to be taken to arrive at holiness, and that at each step we make and believe it to be so much in advance, we find out that, after all, it is still but a beginning. A man who would quit the world, looks upon this action as one after which there will be nothing more to do; but when actually in Religion, he finds himself still beset by all his passions, and that he has simply changed their object, and that he is still far from his view, and that there is another step to be taken that is to detach himself from those objects, from which his religious profession has not entirely separated him, to detach the heart from the world and to have no love for any created thing,—this is quite another thing from the act of leaving the world and entering Religion. When this is done, he will find that there is yet another step to be taken, namely, to detach himself from himself and to seek for God alone in God; not only to seek for no temporal advantage

in Religion, which would be a gross imperfection, but not even to seek his own spiritual advantage therein, and to look with a pure intention to the glory of God alone. To bring me to this state, O my God, Thou must Thyself work mightily in me, for how could any creature of itself ever reach this degree of purity ? *Quis potest facere mundum de inmundo conceptum semine?* *Nonne Tu qui solus es?*—“Who can make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed ? is it not Thou only ?”

A thought which consoles me much is this, that to know whether we are inordinately attached to the things in which obedience obliges us to be engaged; to know, for example, whether we displease God in our way of taking our daily food, or in the satisfaction which we feel in the success of any good work of our own, or in the credit which it confers upon us, or in any other pleasure not unlawful in itself; to know, I say, whether something merely human has crept into these things, we must not judge by our feelings; because it is as impossible not to feel the pleasure which accompanies them, as it is not to feel the

fire when it touches a tender part. But we must examine, 1st. Whether we have in any way sought for the pleasure which we feel. 2nd. Whether we shall feel any difficulty in giving it up. 3rd. If the glory of God being equal, and the choice left to us, we should choose in preference those things which are lowly and distasteful. I think we ought, if such be our disposition, to go on with great courage and liberty in the service of God, and to despise all the doubts and scruples which may arise to hinder or disquiet us.

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## SECOND WEEK.

In the first meditation, I was disturbed by the thought of a weakness into which I had fallen on the preceding day, but having, as I believe, discovered the cause why God had permitted me to fall into this fault, namely, to cure me of a certain self-complacency in which I was beginning to indulge, this thought gave me great peace and joy. I perceived, with satisfaction surely not according to human nature, that I was not what I believed myself

to be, and I do not remember that I ever discovered any truth with so much satisfaction as I have discovered my own unworthiness on this occasion.

In the mystery of the Incarnation, I find nothing but humility and self-abnegation. The angel bows down at the feet of a woman; Mary takes the condition of handmaiden; the Word makes Himself a slave, and Jesus Christ, conceived in His mother's womb, annihilates Himself before God in the deepest and truest sense which it is possible to imagine. O my God! how dost Thou rejoice to see these most admirable persons humble themselves before Thee thus perfectly, while Thou art honoring them with Thy sublimest gifts. Oh, with what delight do I contemplate the interior sentiments of these Holy Persons, and, above all, the profound abnegation of Jesus Christ, by which He begins to glorify His Father, and to repair all the insults by which the pride of man has outraged His Divine Majesty! As for me, I can find no place here to humble myself; for whither can I go, since I find that my Lord Jesus has become nothing for me? Here is

reason enough to bring down my pride,—the Son of God annihilated before his Father. I have never till now understood the saying of St. Bernard: What insolence in a worm to be puffed up with pride, when the only Son of the Father humbles and annihilates Himself!

In the Circumcision, I perceived that the life of an apostle requires the practice of continual mortification. 1st. Without it, God will not reveal Himself. 2nd. Without it, it will be impossible to give edification. A man who cuts off his own pleasures, and who labors without ceasing to subdue his passions, speaks with far more authority than others, and makes a very different impression. As I am naturally inclined to the love of pleasure, I resolved to watch over this evil inclination.

The flight into Egypt, according to the ordinary rules of human prudence, would seem very hard and unreasonable. What was there to be done amongst an unknown and idolatrous people? But it is God who will have it so, and therefore it must be expedient. To argue about obedience, however extravagant the thing commanded may seem to us, is to mistrust the prudence of God,

and to imagine that there are some commands which He cannot turn to His glory and our profit. When a command is given which human reason cannot fathom, a man who has faith will rejoice in the thought that it is God alone who acts, and who prepares for us blessings so much the greater as He sends them in hidden ways, which our blindness cannot penetrate. As for me, I thank God this truth is no difficulty to me, for I have been taught it by experience.

At the Presentation, what an offering is made, and how well made on the part of both Jesus and Mary! What honor is rendered to God on this occasion! I offer the same oblation to Him at Mass, if I do so with the same sentiments and the same desire to please God. I feel great pleasure in considering the clear and distinct prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles in the song of Simeon. *Salutare tuum, quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum: Lumen ad revelationem gentium.* “Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people—a Light to enlighten the Gentiles.” This holy man must have reached a high degree of sanctity to

have been so enlightened and to have received such great favors. There are few real saints, but there are, and always have been, some in all ages.

I omitted the meditation on the Nativity, but I remember I asked God for nearly half an hour, the perfect detachment of which Jesus gives us an example, and I asked for it through the intercession of St. Joseph, of the Blessed Virgin, and for the sake of Jesus Christ Himself. Amongst other devotions to the Holy Virgin, I have resolved never to implore anything of God, in any prayer, without asking the help of Mary.

*Quid est quod me quærebatis, &c.*—"How is it that you sought me?" In this meditation I have been much moved by the sorrow of the Blessed Virgin Mary, during the three days she was deprived of the presence of her Son, but still more by that calmness of spirit, which was not ruffled on this occasion, and which was shown whilst she sought for Jesus, in acts of perfect resignation and submission.

*In his quæ Patris mei sunt oportet me esse.*  
—"I must be about my Father's business." I have discovered many profitable lessons for

myself in these words. Should all the world be against me, laugh at me, complain of me, and blame me, I must still do all that God commands me, all that He inspires me with, for His glory. I have promised this, and through God's grace, I hope to keep my promise; but it will require great watchfulness, without which, one so weak as I am, may easily be overtaken by human respect.

*Et erat subditus illis, crescebat aetate et sapi-entia.*—“And He was subject to them, and advanced in wisdom and age.” I thought how often it is that we decrease instead of increasing in virtue as we advance in years, and above all, in simplicity and fervor with regard to outward humiliations, and in submission to spiritual direction. I felt pain in perceiving that as the number of God's benefits has increased towards us, our love and gratitude have waxed cold. Why cast off the virtues of novices? They are not, indeed, sufficient, and others should be added to them, but there is a great difference between acquiring new virtues and casting off old ones; they must be strengthened and not given up.

In the second place, the love of solitude

seemed to me very much in accordance with the spirit of God. It is the spirit of the world which makes us hurry and desire to get on, and to make ourselves known, and think we shall never arrive at the end soon enough. The spirit of God moves in a contrary way, thirty years of obscurity remaining unknown, notwithstanding all the specious reasons with which a thirst for the glory of God might have furnished a less enlightened zeal. I will remain in solitude as long as obedience will suffer me to do so. No visits of mere civility, especially to women, no particular intimacy with any secular, or at least, none of my own desiring, nor will I do anything to encourage it, unless it be made quite plain to me that the glory of God requires me to act in a different manner. This is one of my resolutions.

In the third place, this interior life of Jesus Christ, which brought out so strongly the lowliness of His actions, seems to me to be the true path of holiness in the way of life I have embraced, as there is no other means of bearing witness for God, since the exterior life is common-place; to this also I feel myself especially

drawn, namely, to apply myself henceforth to do the smallest things with great intentions, and often to exercise, in my secret heart, acts of the most perfect self-abnegation before God, of desire to promote His glory, of faith, of love, of resignation, and of perfect self-sacrifice. This may be always done, even when we are doing nothing.

Although all that we can ever do for God's glory is but very little, and that all the exterior glory which He can derive from us is very little in relation to Him; it is not so, but that the Eternal Word was pleased to become Incarnate for its sake. It is marvellous that He who could have converted the whole world Himself, should have chosen rather to do so through His disciples; He spent His life in forming them, and it seems that of all the means necessary for the conversion of the world, He chose nothing for Himself but suffering and death, and left to mankind all the glory. What love does He show to those men whom He makes use of to sanctify others, which He could do just as well without them!

In the baptism of our Divine Lord, I per-

ceived how a man who is called upon to convert others, needs great virtues, and above all, great humility and exact obedience. There are occasions on which we can imitate this example here, and we must not let them escape; for example, we may so arrange things, as to seem to follow the advice which in reality we give, and to be only the instruments when we are the workmen: this facilitates our work, and keeps us humble. I find no difficulty in attributing everything to God. How could I by myself do anything towards the sanctification of others, when I am so powerless to cure my least imperfections, although I know them, and although I have, so to say, a thousand weapons within my reach wherewith to combat them? I have resolved to be obedient all my life as a child, above all with regard to those things which in any way concern the promotion of God's service. Because without this obedience there is great danger of seeking self in them. What an illusion it is to think to serve God, and glorify Him more, or otherwise, than pleases Him! If you were even the greatest man in the world, where is the difficulty of obedience to a man?

That man is the representative of God, and you very willingly obey the sound of a bell.

I have resolved, further, to honor all those who labor for the salvation of souls, to aid their ministry as far as I am able, to live in great union with them, and to rejoice in their success. An opposite conduct to this is the most absurd, the most imperfect, the most vain, and the furthest from the Spirit of God, which it is possible for a man to pursue, who is working for the salvation of souls.

He was led into the desert. It would seem that thirty years of preparation might have been sufficient; but no, Jesus Christ had no sooner received the mission from His Father, than the Holy Spirit leads Him into the desert, there to practise mortification and other virtues necessary to the work of an apostle. I have resolved to shun all kinds of softness and delicacy of living, of food and clothing, &c.; never to ask for any refreshment, when engaged in preaching, and never to complain of anything. *Non in solo pane vivit homo.*—“Man does not live by bread alone.” Secondly, never to have anything out of the common way in clothes, even in seasons of recrea-

tion, and to make all my journeys as much as possible on foot. There will be great difficulty in doing this, and, besides other good results, it humbles the mind.

I renewed my resolutions to go through my spiritual exercises and all my retreats with great exactness, and with all the fervor in my power; also to meditate much upon the life of Jesus Christ, which is the model of our own. I have come to understand the words of Berchman: *Mortificatio maxima vita communis*. "Life in community is the greatest mortification." This mortifies the body and the mind, all the rest is often only the effects of vanity trying to distinguish itself. At all events, before trying extraordinary things, I must learn to do common things, and to do them under all the circumstances required by the rules; this will carry me on a great way, and even to a high degree of sanctity. I conceived a great desire whilst reading our rules to observe them, by God's grace. I believe this will require great simplicity and recollectedness, great strength and great constancy, and above all, great grace from God.

Jesus Christ chose for His apostles poor and

ignorant men, and according to human judgment, those who seemed little fitted for His purpose. Not because a man must be of obscure birth and unlettered to work for the salvation of souls; but to make those who are called to it, understand how little either their natural or acquired talents are necessary, and to neither of them is any success which they may have to be attributed. He also chose fishermen, &c., to show us that it is not the calling of those who are delicate, but that a thousand hardships must be undergone, and that we must be prepared for the severest labors. I feel myself disposed for them, thanks be to God, and no hardship frightens me: I would willingly die in the struggle. But I feel so unworthy of this grace, that I know not whether God would even make use of me in any way.

*Beati pauperes spiritu, mites, mundo corde.*  
“Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the clean of heart.” It seems to me that these three beatitudes have affinity, and that they cannot exist alone. I am thoroughly convinced that those persons are happiest who are detached from all things, and who have

rooted out of their heart even the disposition to what is evil; but I find myself very far from this state of mind. At the end of this second week, the disposition to vain-glory is almost as strong within me as ever, although it has not the same results, and that I am able through grace to restrain its impulses. I think I have never known myself as I really am so well as now, and I find myself to be so worthless that I am ashamed of myself, and the sight of my miserable condition causes from time to time fits of sadness, which would lead to despair, if God did not sustain me. When I am in this state, nothing comforts me so much as the reflection, that even this sadness is the effect of inordinate vanity, that this knowledge and consciousness of my unworthiness is a great grace from God, and that, provided I always hope in God, and am faithful in combating human nature, He will not suffer me to perish. I submit myself to His will in all things, and am ready, if He will have it so, to pass my life in this wearisome warfare, provided He will keep me by His grace from being overcome. I think, however, that this desire of vain-glory may be suppressed by

dint of restraining its emotions; for we manage at last even to stifle the voice of conscience, though to do so we have to fight against grace, nature, and education.

In the meditation on the three degrees of humility, I felt with a mixture of great sweetness, confusion, and fear, that God calls me to the third degree, which consists in rooting up everything, even the slightest inclination to evil, and in loving that which the world hates. Besides seeing that I should be the most miserable of men, if I were satisfied with anything short of this, a thousand reasons combined to persuade me that I must strive after it with all my strength. 1st. God has loved me too well, to be repaid with a half service; the thought of such a thing being possible is dreadful to me. Could I do aught but belong to God alone, after the mercies He has shown me? Can I keep back anything after all I have received from Him? My heart would never consent to it. 2nd. When I perceive how little I am in myself, and how little I can do for the glory of God in giving myself entirely to his service, I should be ashamed of holding back any part. 3rdly. There would

be no safety for me in any medium I know myself, and that I should soon fall into the extremity of evil. 4thly. They only who have given themselves unreservedly to God, can expect to die in peace. 5thly. They only can lead a peaceful happy life. 6thly. To do much for God, we must belong entirely to Him. If we fall short of this by ever so little, we shall be unable to do anything great for others. 7thly. It is in this state alone that we can maintain a lively faith and a firm hope, that we can draw near to God with confidence, and that we shall infallibly obtain what we ask for.

In the meditation on the three states or three classes, I resolved, and thank God, I believe, in good faith, to be among those who will be made whole at whatever cost; and as I have discovered that the desire of vain-glory is my ruling passion, I made a firm resolution to omit no humiliation that I can impose upon myself, without breaking the rule, and never to avoid those which may come upon me. I have observed, that this continual care to humble and mortify self in everything, sometimes produces a kind of sad-

ness, which weakens and depresses nature, and makes it less disposed to serve God. This is a temptation which I believe may be overcome by the thought that God only requires us to apply ourselves to this exercise out of love to Him, as a faithful friend would try in everything to please his friend, or a good son to serve and give joy to his loving father, without its being necessary to force himself to do so, and preserving, meanwhile, a certain liberty of spirit in the midst of carefulness, both in great and small matters, which is one of the surest marks of true love. We feel a pleasure in doing anything which we think will be acceptable to one we love.

At the repetition of the two last meditations, I began, with a feeling of great sorrow, at the thought of the presumption involved in any deliberate sin, and of the blindness of those who deliberate as to whether it is enough to keep clear of mortal sin, &c.; as if the greater good should not be preferred, without a doubt, to the lesser. This right feeling was extinguished, so to say, by a thought of self-complacency, which I was obliged to combat, and I cannot say how

much I felt humbled thereby. I passed all the rest of my meditation in the continual contemplation of my own nothingness, and of my unworthiness of any kind of favor or consolation. I accepted, with an entire submission, the deprivation of all these blessings for the rest of my life, and consented to be, until the day of my death, the laughing-stock and sport of devils, and the object of every kind of temptation. I seem to have acknowledged, with the same feelings as the Canaanitish woman, that I ought not to have any share in the children's bread; I only asked God for what is absolutely necessary to support me, so that I may not offend Him. I do not, however, despair of obtaining that degree of holiness which my vocation requires; but I foresee that I shall have to ask, and to wait a long time for it. Nevertheless, I am resolved, please God, to persevere: holiness is so great and precious a thing, that it cannot be purchased at too dear a rate.

It was on this occasion, that I felt strongly moved to carry into execution the plan of life which I have contemplated for three or four years, and with the consent of my director

I gave myself, in good earnest, to Thee my God. Oh ! how great are Thy mercies to me, Thou most supreme Majesty ! Who am I, that Thou deignest to receive the sacrifice of my heart ? It shall be altogether Thine ; no creature shall have any part in it, nor is there any creature worthy to share it with Thee. Be Thou, then, most sweet Jesus, my father, my friend, my master, my all. Since Thou art pleased to accept my heart, would it not be folly for me not to be content with Thine ? I will henceforth live only for Thee, and desire to live the longer, if it be Thy good pleasure, that I may suffer the more. I do not ask for death, which would shorten my miseries. It is not Thy will that I should die at the same age as Thyself, but it seems, at least, just and reasonable that I should begin to live to Thee, and for Thee, at the same age when Thou didst die for all men, and for me in particular, who have so often rendered myself unworthy of so great a grace, Be pleased to receive, then, most loving Saviour of mankind, the sacrifice which the most ungrateful of men offers to Thee, to repair the wrongs I have not ceased to do

Thee in offending Thee, even to this very hour of my life.

*The Outline of a Vow.*

*Juravi, et statui custodire judicia justitiae tuae.*—“ I have sworn and am determined to keep the judgments of Thy justice.”

I feel myself moved to make a vow to God, to observe our Constitutions, our General Rules, our Rules of Modesty, and that which relates to priests, in the following manner:—

*Summary of the Constitutions.*

1. To labor for my own perfection all my life long, by the observance of the rules, and for the sanctification of my neighbour, by using every opportunity which obedience and divine Providence may give me, to exercise my zeal without offending the rules of discretion and Christian prudence.

2. To go with perfect indifference, and without a question, whithersoever obedience may send me.

3. To confer with the superior about external penances, and never to omit, without necessity, those which he may recommend me

to perform; to make a general confession every year, and examination of conscience twice a day; to have a fixed confessor, and to lay open my conscience unreservedly to him.

4. To love my relations only in Jesus Christ. It seems to me that, through the grace of our Lord, I am already in this disposition, and therefore this point does not trouble me.

5. To be willing to be reproved, that my superiors should be told of my faults, and that I should also acquaint them with those of my brethren, when the Rule seems to require it.

6. To wish for contempt, calumny, and injuries, and even to pass for a fool, though without giving any cause for it, if it can be done without offending God. I believe that to accomplish this, I have only to ask of God that He will keep me in the same mind to which, through His infinite mercy, He has already brought me.

7. With regard to great self-abnegation and continual mortification, I believe I may vow, 1st. Never to have any active preference concerning life, health, prosperity, or

adversity, or as to occupation and place, except in as far as such preference may be conformable to God's will. 2nd. To desire as much as possible everything most contrary to my natural inclinations, if it be not opposed to the glory of God, and I think that, through His infinite goodness, He has inspired me with this very disposition. 3rd. Never to look for what flatters the senses, such as concerts, public shows, sweet scents, things pleasant to the taste, nor for any thing which may indulge vanity; never to seek it, I say, either in my conversation or my actions, and as to my personal wants, such as clothing and furniture, to be content with what is given me, unless obedience, or the rules concerning health, oblige me to do otherwise. 4th. Never to avoid any mortification which may come to me, unless I judge as before God that I ought to act differently, for some reason which appears to be sufficient. 5th. Never to take pleasure in any thing to which necessity obliges me, such as eating, drinking, and sleeping, nor in those things which in the Society cannot be avoided without affectation or singularity, such as recreations, dishes out

of the common way, and the like; never to partake of these things because of the pleasure nature may find in them, but to renounce it in my heart, and to mortify myself herein according to the impulse of the Holy Spirit, and so far as I can do so without making myself remarkable.

8. The four following rules are comprised in the others. As to the 17th, which concerns purity of intention, it seems to me that I may vow: 1st. With God's help, never to do anything but for His glory, that is, with deliberation. 2nd. Never to do anything, or omit anything, out of human respect. This last point gives me much pleasure, and I believe it will tend to great exterior peace.

9. This vow includes, if I am not mistaken, the observance of the 19th rule.

10. As to the 21st rule, I can vow: 1st, Never to omit my meditation, and always to observe, both in the preparation and in the body of the meditation, the additions of St. Ignatius, unless reasons, either of necessity or of charity, or something equally imperative, should lead me to dispense with any of these points.

2nd, With regard to Mass and to the Divine Office, to observe the rules given to priests.

11. As regards poverty, I have already vowed to observe all the rules given us by St. Ignatius on the subject.

12. As regards chastity, never to look upon any object which might inspire thoughts contrary to this virtue, at least intentionally; or, without necessity, to read, or listen to anything contrary to purity, that is, unless charity and the duties of my office make it necessary. To observe the rules laid down for priests in the confessional and in visits paid to women.

13. Always to eat temperately, and with modesty and decorum, and to say the blessing and thanksgiving with reverence and devotion.

14. With regard to obedience, I have already vowed to observe it according to the rules.

15. To observe, with regard to receiving and sending letters, whatever is desired by the superiors.

16. To make a manifestation of conscience, from time to time, according to the form given us in our constitutions.

17. To conceal nothing from my confessor, at least, of what he ought to know in order to direct me.

18. With regard to brotherly love, affairs purely secular, care of health, and the like, I find no difficulty, nor in the way of bearing illness.

*General Rules.*

1. To make an examination of conscience, and particular examen twice daily, and to mark the results according to the instruction of St. Ignatius; to do my spiritual reading, when I am able; not to absent myself from the sermon without leave when I am in the house; to go to confession only to my ordinary confessor; to keep the abstinence on Fridays; not to preach without the approbation of superiors.

The three following rules concern poverty, all the others seem to be without difficulty, and I think I may vow to keep them always, unless I have special dispensation.

I must remember on arriving at any of our houses to ask leave of the superior: 1. To have books. 2. To be allowed frequently to

visit the sick, unless it be the custom to ask leave for each separate visit. 3. To enter the room of another for a minute, if there be real occasion, such as to borrow a light, to give back a book, &c. 4. To speak whilst in the house with externs, and to call them if necessary. 5. To do what is asked of me with regard to messages between externs and those in the house, and between those in the house and externs, unless there seems to be anything in them out of the common way. 6. To write letters with the understanding that they will be shown, when required, if it is not the custom to ask leave each time we write.

*The Rules of Modesty and of Priests.*

The rules of modesty are so framed that they can never be irksome.

The rules peculiar to priests contain nothing, I think, which can be difficult.

The rule which recommends the teaching of children does not, as it seems to me, impose stricter obligation than that included in the vow taken by the professed.

A vow might be made respecting the rule for any particular occupation, so far as it becomes applicable to oneself.

*Motives for making this Vow.*

1. To lay upon myself an indispensable necessity of fulfilling, as far as possible, the duties of my station and of fidelity to God, even in the smallest things.
2. To break once for all the chains of self-love, and to cut off from it all hope of indulgence—a hope which seems to be always alive in the heart, however mortified for the time we may be.
3. To acquire at once the merit of a long life, whilst I am in complete uncertainty as to whether life will be prolonged through a single day, and to place me beyond the fear that death may come and deprive me of the power of giving any further glory to God, because my will to glorify Him eternally cannot fail to be accepted for the deed; since I bind myself so strictly to its accomplishment.
4. To make reparation for past irregularities by the necessity laid upon me, to be very exact for the future, so long as it pleases God to prolong my life. This motive touches me deeply, and influences me more than any other.

5. As some sort of acknowledgment for the mercies which God has showered upon me, to bind myself irrevocably to obey Him in the least of His commands.

6. Out of reverence for the will of God, which deserves to be obeyed under pain of eternal damnation, although God in His great goodness does not always bind us to fulfil it under such an awful penalty.

7. To do all that is possible on my part to belong to God alone, to detach my heart from all creatures, and to love Him at least effectively with all my strength.

*Some of the Considerations which encourage me to make this Vow.*

1. I do not think that I shall have greater difficulty in observing all which this vow includes, than a man naturally inclined to pleasure would have in observing holy purity, which requires such frequent conflict and continual watchfulness.

2. God, by whose inspiration St. Ignatius made his rules, expects that they should be observed. It is not, therefore, impossible to

do so, not even morally impossible. Now the vow so far from rendering the observance of the rules more difficult, in fact makes it more easy, not only because it opposes to the temptation to break them the fear of a grievous sin, but also because it induces God to give us greater help when there is need for it.

3. Berchmans passed five years in the Society without his conscience reproaching him for the infraction of any rule; why, with God's grace, should it not be the same with me, at an age when I ought to have greater strength, and to be less susceptible to the snare of human respect, which is the most dangerous enemy we have to combat.

4. I do not fear that it will be a stumbling-block to me, and deprive me of the peace of my soul. *Pax multa diligentibus legem tuam, et non est illis scandalum.*—“Much peace have they that love Thy law, and to them there is no stumbling-block.” This is an article of faith, and consequently, the more we love this law the greater shall be our peace. *Ambulabo in latitudine, quia mandata tua exquisivi.* “And I walked at large, because I have sought after Thy commandments.” An exact

obedience to the smallest rules gives freedom to the mind, instead of placing it under restraint.

5. I believe that I have lived for some time past very much as I shall have to live after taking this vow, and that it is mere for the sake of ensuring perseverance, than of doing anything new or extraordinary, that I think of making this engagement.

6. It seems to me that the very thought of taking this vow has detached me from the things of the world, something in the same way as if I were to feel death approaching.

7. I do not lean either upon my resolution or upon my own strength, but upon the goodness of God, which is infinite, and upon His grace, which He never fails to communicate abundantly, and so much the more, the more we endeavour to do in His service. *Non delinquent omnes qui sperant in eo.*—“None of them that trust in Him shall offend.”

8. I think that this vow only engages me to a somewhat greater degree of watchfulness than I have hitherto exercised; for I do not think that I would now deliberately break any one of our rules.

9. In order to prevent scruples, I need not bind myself to anything on which I feel doubt.

10. I can make the engagement under this condition, that if after a certain time I find that my vow causes me disquiet, the engagement shall cease, but if not, that it shall continue to my life's end.

11. No rule, no exterior rule at least, is broken, when dispensation can be obtained; for it would be very wrong in any one to prefer breaking a rule, and displeasing God, even in a matter binding under sin, to saying a few words to the Superior.

12. I do not intend to bind myself in those cases in which another may dispense himself from the Rule, without doing anything contrary to perfection.

13. The thought of this engagement rejoices me much more than it alarms me. It seems to me that, far from making a slave of myself, I am going to enter the kingdom of liberty and peace. Self-love will no longer dare to cheat me, when there will be such great danger in following its suggestions. I believe that I am drawing near to true happiness, and that I have at last found the

treasure for which we must give up all that we possess.

14. It is not a passing fervour; I have for a long time past contemplated this step, and I have always determined to sift it thoroughly on the present occasion, and the nearer the time approaches for its execution, the more easy it seems to me, and the greater strength and resolution do I feel.

15. Nevertheless, I wait for your decision, my Rev. Father, before carrying it into effect. I therefore pray you to examine this writing, and to consider especially the latter points, in which, perhaps, you may find some indications of the spirit of God; if not, you have only to tell me that you do not consider it expedient for me to do as I propose, and I shall submit to your judgment with the same respect that I owe to the word of God.

In the meditation on the Mission of the Apostles, I seemed to begin to know my vocation, and the spirit of the Society; and I also believe that, by the grace of God, I perceive this spirit to be kindled and strengthened in me, showing itself both by a particular affection

and esteem for all the rules, and in a greater fervour and purity in my zeal. With regard to the words which gave the mission to the apostles, *Docete omnes*, "Teach all," I understood that we are sent to all manner of persons; and wherever a Jesuit finds himself, and in whatever company, he is as it were sent by God to treat of their salvation with all whom he may meet, and that if he does not speak of it—if he does not take advantage of every opportunity of furthering it, he betrays his ministry, and renders himself unworthy of the name he bears. I have then resolved to remember this on all occasions, and to endeavour to lead conversation to subjects which may edify those with whom I speak, so that no one may be able to leave me without a greater knowledge of God than when he first came to me, and if it be possible, greater zeal for his own salvation.

In the meditation upon Zeal, the simplicity and indifference which ought to characterize it, have occupied all my time. I thank God that I do not find in myself any repugnance to being occupied in the instruction of children, and of the poor; on the contrary, I

think that I shall embrace this occupation with pleasure; it does not expose me to the danger of vanity, and has generally a greater measure of success. After all, the soul of a poor man is as dear to Jesus Christ as that of a king, and it matters little by whom Paradise is filled. This is one of the principal marks of His mission given by Jesus Christ: *Pauperes evangelizantur*—“The poor have the Gospel preached to them;” and by this mark, we may perceive that it was the Spirit of God who founded the Society; for to teach the catechism and take care of the poor, form one of our chief duties. Our constitutions recommend nothing so much as this. It seems to me that we have great reason to hope that we are sent by God, and that we seek Him in what we are doing, when we have acquired the indifference I speak of. For this reason I have resolved, whether in the confessional or in preaching, to love to minister to the poor, and to give them the preference over the rich: the latter will never be in want of persons to attend to them.

In the meditation upon Apostolic Poverty, I have resolved to honor and to take pleasure

in this virtue throughout my life, and to have always the consolation of being able to say, "I have nothing," whilst worldlings and self-love find satisfaction in seeing and counting their possessions: above all, to have no books; this will oblige me to read thoroughly and to read often those I think necessary, and as for the rest I can very well do without them.

As to Mortification, I perceived that an apostle is not called to a life of softness and repose. He must labor and toil, fearing neither cold nor heat, neither fasts nor vigils, he must give his life and strength to the work. The worst that can befall him is to die in the service of God and of his neighbours: I do not think that this ought to frighten any one. Health and life are, to say the least, indifferent to me, but sickness and death; if they should come to me as the consequence of my labor for the salvation of souls, will be acceptable and most precious.

The same day after dinner, while reading the Life of Berchmans, when I came to the death of this holy young man, I was extremely moved by the consolation which he expressed at that time, in the reflection, that

he never had broken any of the rules. I then began to consider what I should have to say on this subject, if I were obliged now to give an account to God; and I suddenly conceived so great a sorrow for having so ill observed my rules, that I shed abundant tears, and in my prayers afterwards I made fervent resolution to become a better Jesuit for the future. I invoked this holy youth with great confidence, and besought him, for the sake of the Blessed Virgin, whom he loved so well, and the Society itself, to which he was so faithful, to obtain for me the grace to live until death, as he himself had lived during those five years. Throughout the day I sorrowed greatly, having continually before my eyes the rules I have so often overlooked and broken; I shed many tears, and I believe that by the grace of God, I shall not be easily led to break them for the future. But the sorrow for what is past remains: I have never until now understood how much I have been to blame. I believe that if any one had endeavoured to persuade Berchmans to break any rule at the hour of his death, no consideration could

have induced him to commit this fault, after having passed his life without failing in the observance of any of them. Now, we have all the same reason for resisting temptations of this kind; if I break silence to-day, I shall no less displease God, and slight an order given by our holy Founder under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I have done my part towards destroying regularity, and the Rule is not so insignificant but that the well-being of the whole body may depend upon its observance.

With regard to contempt of the World, it appears to me, that the practice of the presence of God is a very efficacious aid towards gaining it. It is a thought of St. Basil, that a man who has a king and a lacquey for witnesses for all that he does, forgets altogether the presence of the lacquey, and thinks only of the king's approbation. It is a strange and miserable slavery which a man undergoes, who seeks to please other men. When shall I be able to say, *Mihi mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo*—"The world is crucified to me, and I to the world." I have prayed earnestly to Jesus Christ and

to the Blessed Virgin Mary, that they would grant me this disposition.

In the meditation on Humility, I found and understood it to be true, that this grace should be pre-eminent in an apostolic man; and the fear of not having enough of it will keep me, I think, in great dread for the rest of my life. Nevertheless, I think it does not require much more than to be upon our guard, and to avoid thoughtlessness; for if a man reflects upon what he is, upon what he has been, and upon what he can do by himself, it will be very difficult for him to give himself credit for anything; and to humble his pride, he has only to remember that the first sign of good in him, is to account himself nothing. Secondly, it is sufficient to consider Jesus Christ annihilated, in good truth, and acknowledging before God that He is nothing, and that all the glory of what He does belongs solely to His Father. Meanwhile, men praise me—they are mistaken, it is an injustice done to God; it is as if we were to praise an actor for the words which he recites, and which another man wrote. Besides, we are not esteemed so highly as we imagine; our

faults are known to others, even those, perhaps, which escape our own observation, or, at least, people do not think much about us. But supposing that we do great things, or rather that God does great things by us, He is worthy, indeed, of all admiration and praise, for making so good a use of so bad an instrument. But I am none the better for it, and God may, perhaps, condemn me after saving others by my means, as a painter throws a piece of charcoal into the fire after having made use of it to sketch an admirable drawing. How admirable was the conduct of the Blessed Virgin Mary: she acknowledged, in all sincerity, that God had done great things to her, and that she would, therefore, receive great praise and honor through all ages; but instead of exalting herself, she says: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum.*—“My soul does magnify the Lord.”

At the repetition of the same meditation, after having acknowledged and confessed before God, that I had never done anything of myself, I saw how just it is that God alone should be glorified, and it seemed to me that a man who finds himself commended for some

virtue, or for some good action, should feel as much ashamed as a man of honor would do, who should be mistaken for another, and praised for something which he had not done.

But we are vain enough to be puffed up by those qualities which, whether natural or spiritual, are not one's own. What meanness it is! and what a humiliation when, on the great judgment day, God shall make this vain man stand forth, and showing him before all the world what is his own and what he has received, He shall reproach him with his vanity, saying: *Quid habes quod non accepisti? si autem accepisti quid gloriaris?* “What hast thou that thou hast not received ? and if thou hast received, why dost thou glory ?” Will he not be like a swindler who, having passed for a while for an honest man, in virtue of his stolen cloak, is found out in an honorable company, and covered with confusion. It will be much worse for me, O my God, when Thou shovest not only that I have had nothing whereof I had a right to boast, but that I had not even that whereof I have boasted ; when Thou shalt expose my hypocrisy, and my abuse of Thy grace, and

all my interior wretchedness and misery. God showed me to myself on this occasion, so deformed, so miserable, so utterly devoid of merit, and of every virtue, that I have never been so displeasing to myself. I seem to have heard His voice within me, going through all the virtues one by one, and showing me plainly that I do not possess one of them; and I besought Him earnestly to keep this light always before me. I confess that I find this knowledge of myself, which grows on me from day to day, weakens, or at least modifies, a certain firm confidence which I have for a very long time placed in the mercy of God. I no longer dare to lift my eyes to heaven; I feel myself to be so unworthy of His grace, that I cannot tell whether I have not even prevented its entrance into my heart. This feeling comes, above all, from the comparison I make between my life, my sins, and my pride, and the innocence and humility of the Saints.

The meditation on Distrust of Self, I found, follows most easily after the preceding. When we come to know what it is to save a soul, and what we are in ourselves, we must be very soon

convinced that we can do nothing towards it of ourselves. What folly to imagine that, by some few passing words we can do that which cost Jesus Christ so much! You speak, and a soul is converted: so in a puppet show, the puppet is commanded to move, and the master moves it by means of a spring,—the command goes for nothing at all. *Exi à me, quia homo peccator sum, Domine*,—“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” This is the expression of a soul in whom, or by whom, God would work marvels.

In the meditation on Prayer, as I find myself by the mercy of God very much drawn to the practice of prayer, I asked of God, with great courage, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, that He would give me grace to love this exercise more and more, to the hour of my death. Prayer is our only means of purifying ourselves, of uniting ourselves with God, and of being able, through His co-operation, to do anything for His glory. We must pray in order to obtain the virtues of an apostle: we must pray that they may be made useful to others; we must pray not to lose them ourselves whilst we are helping others.

This counsel or commandment, "Pray without ceasing," seems very sweet to me, and no ways impossible. It includes the practice of the presence of God; and I will, by God's help, endeavour to follow it. We have always need of God; we must, therefore, pray to Him always: the more we pray, the better we shall please Him, and the more we shall obtain. I do not ask for those consolations in prayer, which God gives to whom He will. I am not worthy of them, I have not strength to bear them. Extraordinary favours are not good for me; to give them to me would be like building on the sand,—it would be like pouring precious liquor into a pierced vessel, which cannot retain it. I ask God to give me a solid, simple method of prayer, which may glorify Him and not puff me up. Dryness and desolation, accompanied by God's grace, are good for me. I seem, then, to make with pleasure acts of the most excellent virtues. I strive against evil inclinations, and try to remain faithful to God, &c.

As regards Conformity to the Will of God, from the very beginning of the meditation, I felt myself drawn to make acts of this con-

formity. I made them without difficulty, because, in truth, by the grace of God, I feel no preference for any state, and I think I could accept with submission, through the same grace, the most grievous misfortunes which the Providence of God might permit to fall upon me, or at all events speedily resolve to do so, unless God Himself were to forsake me. Above all, I have resigned myself to be sanctified in the way it shall please God to order for me, by the withdrawal of all sensible consolation; if He will have it so, by interior trials, by continual warfare with my passions: these things are what seem to me the hardest to bear in this life, and yet I submit to them the more willingly, that I believe this to be the surest road, the least subject to delusion, and the shortest way to acquire perfect purity of heart, great love of God, and great merit in His sight.

## THE THIRD WEEK.

In the first meditation of the third week—which is on the Preparation for the Passion—when I considered the ardent desire which Jesus Christ had to suffer, my mind first dwelt upon the desire the Saints have had to die, which desire made death full of inexpressible sweetness to them. I think this must be the effect of their having responded with an inviolable fidelity, to the grace of God, and to their having done for His sake, all they could do during the course of many years. This thought has kindled within my heart a great desire to lose no more time, but to do, to the utmost, all the good in my power, in order to be in a condition to desire death and to receive it with joy. Then I considered, that a person who truly desires to suffer for Jesus Christ, is like one pressed by excessive hunger or thirst, who, while waiting for his meal, seizes eagerly upon any morsel of food or drop of water which falls in his way. I feel a great desire to suffer for God, and I do not know of any kind of suffering which I would not accept, as I believe,

with great joy; but I think it is a favour which God only grants to His friends, and I feel myself so unworthy of it, that I do not believe God will ever grant me this grace.

Two things especially touched me with regard to the Betrayal of Jesus Christ, and occupied me during the whole time of meditation. First, the disposition with which Jesus Christ went out to meet those who came to seek Him, with the same firmness, the same courage, the same calm countenance, as if His soul enjoyed a perfect peace. His heart is filled with sorrow, every passion is unchained within Him, His whole nature is disturbed; and amidst all this confusion, all these temptations, His heart rests unmoved upon God, makes no false step, nor hesitates for one moment to take the course suggested by the most heroic virtue. This is a miracle which the Spirit of God alone is able to work—to harmonize together in the same soul, war and peace, trouble and calmness, desolation and a certain masculine strength of mind, which neither evil spirits nor even God Himself, apparently armed against it, or at least seeming to forsake it, can shake or overcome.

The second is the disposition of that same Sacred Heart, with regard to Judas who betrayed Him, to the Apostles who basely forsook Him, to the priests and others who were His persecutors. It is certain that all this failed to excite in Him the slightest movement of hatred or indignation, and that it in no way diminished the love He bore to His disciples, and to His persecutors; that He sorrowed deeply and truly for the injury which they did to themselves; and that all He suffered, far from troubling Him, in some sort, soothed His grief; because He saw that His suffering might prove a remedy for the misery of His enemies. I picture to myself, then, this Heart without gall, full of compassion for His enemies, which no perfidy, no ill-treatment, could stir into resentment, and then when returning to Mary, I ask her to incline my heart towards the same dispositions; I perceive that hers is in perfect conformity with His; that she is overwhelmed with sorrow, without losing in any degree her serene self-mastery, and that she preserves a clear unclouded judgment, even in this terrible crisis; she wishes no evil to the murderers of her Son; on the contrary, she

loves them, and offers Him up in sacrifice for them. I own that this sight fills me with admiration, that it produces in me an unspeakable love of virtue, and fills me with the greatest imaginable joy.

O Hearts truly worthy to possess all hearts, to reign over all hearts, both of angels and of men! Ye shall be henceforth my pattern and my rule, and when the occasion arises, I will always endeavour to feel as you have felt. I desire, for the future, that my heart should live in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, or that the Hearts of Jesus and Mary should so dwell in mine, that they may communicate their sentiments to it, and that it may never be moved or agitated except by impressions received from them.

From the word *Amice*, "Friend," it is clear that Jesus loved Judas, otherwise He would not have called him "friend." Jesus Christ had a great desire for his conversion, and he chose the shaft well; it pierced the heart of Judas, but it was with him as with a person hopelessly ill, to whom the strongest remedies are applied; they have their effect, but the dying man has no strength to bear up under

them, and He expires under their operation. Every circumstance throughout is admirable: Jesus Christ bound, Jesus Christ before the footstool of the judge, accused and silent. It seems to me that, with God's grace, I could bear to be calumniated and treated as a criminal, that it would annihilate self-love, and that I should thank God for it, with all my heart, and earnestly beg of Him to let me die in this state. But it is losing time to think of it. I feel that this grace is not for me; one must be a saint first; we must try to profit by the least occasions which may present themselves, and I must take care, whilst indulging these visionary desires, that I am not all the time seeking for the vain-glory of the world, and neglecting the small occasions which present themselves.

In the meditation upon St. Peter's fall, I perceived, with fear and amazement, how great is our weakness, and the thought makes me shudder. I have in myself the source and seed of all vices; there is not one that I am not capable of committing; there is nothing between myself and the abyss of sin but the grace of God. How this thought should humble and confound, then, the holiest soul! This is

why St. Paul says, *In timore et tremore*.—“ In fear and trembling.” Jesus Christ passed the whole night in bonds, and as a laughing-stock to the insolent soldiers. What a beautiful subject for meditation is the Mind of Jesus during this terrible night! What can be more wonderful than to behold the Incarnate Wisdom, Jesus Christ, treated as a fool by Herod and his court! The world has not yet changed its opinion of the Son of God,—it still accounts him to be a fool. What firmness and what courage in Jesus Christ to have despised all the glory, all the homage He might so easily have gained from this court, to have been willing to allow the king and all his officers to take Him for a madman! What a sacrifice offered to His Father! How glorious is it! How cowardly are we, who care so much for the judgment of our fellow men, and make ourselves the slaves of their opinions! When shall we throw off this shameful yoke? When shall we rise above the world? How worthy is it of a Christian soul to suffer the reproach which it might have avoided, and to be content with God alone as the witness of a truth which would tell to its advantage! My God!

I will desire to become a saint between Thee and me alone, and to despise whatever contempt may come upon me which does not lessen me in Thy estimation. The consideration of these noble and heroic actions, which are so far beyond human nature, seems to raise my soul above itself and all created things.

What a spectacle to behold Jesus Christ led back to Pilate, dressed like a fool! Pilate condemns Him to be scourged: what injustice! Jesus Christ utters no complaint, although He perceives the motive of the sentence to be the jealousy of the priests, and the hypocritical compliance of the judge, and although He foreknows the barbarity of this punishment. I compared His conduct with ours when we are injured in any way: how can we ever complain when we behold such an example! I conceived great shame at the remembrance of the past. O my God! the opportunities I have had will never return, I am not worthy of them. I have resolved never more to complain of anything. I am convinced that in whatever way I may be treated, no injustice can be done me.

Nothing moves me so much in the scourging, as the contempt shown therein for Jesus Christ. The most wicked among men meets with compassion when he is condemned to death; men even throw stones at the executioner if he makes a murderer suffer more than is necessary: and behold Jesus given up to the caprice of the soldiers, who tear Him to pieces, who heap one torture upon another, who use Him according to their will with impunity, as if He were not a human being. He utters no complaint; He humbles Himself more and more in the presence of His Father; He accepts all His sufferings as from His hand; He is glad to be able to render supreme honor through this terrible humiliation. They put a crown of thorns upon His head: it was to expiate our miserable ambition to be lords over all, to excel, and to be first above every one in all things.

Pilate brings Him forth before the people —*Ecce Homo*—“Behold the man.” He must have been in a piteous condition; such an exhibition is for those who love to play a prominent part, and to gain the applause of men. Barabbas is preferred before Him,

How monstrous it seems to us ! He even humbles Himself below the humiliation of this unjust comparison. At the same time He was saying in His heart to His Father : *Ego vermis et non homo*—“ Behold, I am a worm, and no man.” They were crying out, *Crucifige*—“ Crucify Him ;” and He was consenting to it with all His heart. Are there any Christians in all the world who follow this example—who are formed upon this pattern ? If each time a rule is broken, out of regard to human opinion, we considered that this is to prefer a man before God, I do not think it would so often be done. This thought touches me, and I feel as if I should be for the future inflexible on this point. These seem so insignificant to me at this moment, that I cannot understand how any one can take so much pains to please another, when he has God for the witness of his actions. But, alas, O my God ! will not these thoughts be forgotten, and vanish on the first occasion ?

I am not so much astonished at the injustice of Pilate, in condemning Jesus Christ, as I have been moved by the spectacle of Jesus Christ’s submission to this unjust judg-

ment. He takes His Cross and bears it with perfect humility, gentleness, and resignation; He reaches the summit of the mount, and submits to be stripped of His garments; He lies down upon the Cross, and stretches out His hands and His feet to be pierced, and He offers Himself up to His Father with an intensity of purpose of which He alone is capable. This contemplation makes the Cross appear so lovely to me, that I feel as if I could have no happiness without it. I look upon those whom God visits with humiliation and affliction of any kind, with reverence; they are, without doubt, His favorites, and in order to humble me, I have only to compare my prosperity with their adversity.

In the meditation on Jesus Christ dying upon the Cross, I found that the old man still lives within me; and that if God does not sustain me with the powerful help of His grace, I shall find myself, at the end of my thirty days of retreat and meditation, as weak as I was at the beginning. A great miracle must be wrought by God within me, to make me die to myself. *Adhuc vivit in me vetus homo, non est totus crucifixus et non est perfectè mor-*

*tuus; bella movet intestina; non regnum anima patitur esse quietum.*

I have observed that whenever God has given me a lively sense of my miseries, and that I have begun to pray after some fault or weakness, which has made me conscious of my imperfections, I have found consolation at the end of my prayer, and that I have risen from it with increased strength. *Iratus es, et misertus es mei, conversus est furor tuus, et consolatus es me.*—"Thou hast been angry and hast had mercy on me, and turning away Thine anger, Thou hast comforted me." This happens to me even out of the time of prayer, after having, by God's grace, overcome any temptation. This has even now been the case; I have renewed my determination to give no quarter to self-love, and to be upon my guard against all its attacks. I have asked this favor of Jesus Christ with great fervor, and have laid open before Him all my unworthiness and my weakness, which I discover day by day to be greater than I had known before.

At the Burial, seeing how far I am still from the state to which Jesus Christ humbled

Himself suffering for His Father's honor and for my salvation, I was very much moved and said: O my God! is it possible that such dreadful, such deep humiliation, and so ignominious a death, should have been suffered to appease Thine anger, and to draw down Thy blessings and Thy graces upon me, and that I am, nevertheless, still so imperfect! Eternal Father! has not enough been done to make me a saint? How is it that I feel no change in me, in the least degree, answerable to the toils and sufferings which have been undergone for me? A heavy burthen, indeed! but if Thou wilt suffer me to say so, it seems to me that Thou hast not yet given me all the graces which correspond to the price paid for them. I expect great results from the zeal of Thy Son for my salvation; but I do not feel them yet, as I think, in the measure which I have reason to expect. It is, perhaps, that I do not desire to feel these effects, but, O my God! if it were so, I should not offer Thee the death of Thy Son, and the sacrifice of the Mass, to this effect; we do not employ such powerful remedies, if we do not desire to derive profit from them. I must

learn to live as if I were already dead and buried. *Oblivioni datus sum tamquam mortuus a corde*.—"I am forgotten, as one dead from the heart."

To be forgotten—to be nobody in the world—to be as nothing; this is the state which, for the future, must be mine, so far as it is possible, and to which I must desire to be entirely conformed.

At the Resurrection, what joy for those who had suffered with Jesus Christ, and who had truly sorrow for His sufferings,—for holy Mary, St. John, the Magdalene, etc.! As for others, they have as little share in this great festival as they had in the sorrowful mysteries which preceded it. With what fulness of joy does God reward the sufferings and the humiliations of His Son! To say nothing of heaven, the seat of His great glory, for one Judas who betrayed and sold Him upon earth, how many millions of men will strip themselves of all things, in order to possess Him! For one ungrateful and sacrilegious city, which had rejected Him for its king, how many kingdoms and empires are obedient to His power! He was denied by St. Peter; how many

millions of martyrs will suffer death rather than renounce Him! how many altars shall be raised to Him who stood at Herod's footstool! how many true acts of adoration for the mockeries of the soldiers! what treasures lavished upon His churches and His altars, for the purple mantle and the white robe, etc.!

Whilst contemplating the Impassibility of Jesus Christ, I examined closely into what might still disturb me, and I felt an extreme repugnance to obey in a certain particular; I overcame it by the grace of God, and I feel willing to do anything that is desired of me. I have come to the conclusion, that it is dangerous to make plans even with regard to little things, unless one is resolved to give them all up for the sake of obedience or charity. There is danger of too much human attachment, when we feel a difficulty in quitting any occupation, and when we would rather continue it than do anything else, or even do nothing, if God would have it so. I have resolved to be upon my guard in this matter, and to have, through the grace of God, the consolation of yielding nothing to

human nature. I must, with God's help, before determining upon anything with regard to any proposition made to me, consult with God, and accustom myself to anticipate the emotions that circumstances are likely to produce in my soul by raising my heart to God, and testing, by the rules of the Gospel, what my impressions should be; without this precaution, it is impossible to preserve peace in the soul, and to avoid falling into many faults; because everything that happens, has either a pleasant or unpleasant aspect to human nature, and it is not by this that we should view it. There is, however, no other way of avoiding this, than to raise the heart to God, and to look at all things from the elevated point of view of which I have spoken.

St. Ignatius' method of making a short examination or deliberation at the beginning of every action, and especially when there is any danger of committing faults, is of incomparable excellence, and I have resolved to adopt it; it cannot fail, in time, of producing great purity of intention and great tranquillity of conscience. It will not be very difficult,

with God's grace, to do this, or to make the examen which should follow afterwards. When there is a great zeal for perfection, it will be done naturally, and almost unconsciously.

*Opus consummavi quod dedisti mihi, ut facerem.*—"I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." What wonderful words are these! Jesus and Mary could use them in death. I have observed that whenever I determine to imitate Jesus Christ in this respect, throughout my life, my nature shrinks back, as it were, appalled at such a resolution; and that I feel greater strength to carry it into practice by resolving, for example, to pass this month—this year, in doing all in my power to make my actions acceptable to God, and as free from imperfection as it is possible. This will require great watchfulness and the practice of the rules, and also frequent self-examination, accompanied by prayer for manifold graces and much help from God.

In the repetition of the meditation on the Ascension, I remarked that Jesus Christ, after having suffered, and died, and risen again, went out of Jerusalem, gained the summit of the mount, and, after so many trials, being

entirely detached from the world and from earthly things, ascended without difficulty into heaven. That which prevents our following Him, is that we are either leading a merely natural life, but are buried in sin, or are absorbed in our relations with other men, or attached to the earth, where we still find our happiness. St. Paul says, *Conversatio nostra in cælis est*—“Our conversation is in heaven.” Blessed are they who can say the same. For myself, I ask of God to enable me to live between heaven and earth, without enjoying either the pleasures of this world or those of paradise, detached from all things, and only bound to Him who may everywhere be found. It is for us to deny ourselves all earthly pleasures, at least to accept of none from any motive of finding pleasure in them; to detach our hearts from them, if we cannot absolutely give them up, and to render them irksome, through an ardent desire to renounce them for the love of God. With regard to heavenly consolations, we must leave all to God, who knows our strength and who has His own designs for us, and we must live in a state of great indifference and perfect willingness to do without them.

In the meditation on the Love of God, I was very much moved at the consideration of all the blessings I have received from God, from the first moment of my life even to this time; what goodness, what care, what providence, both for my body and my soul! what patience, what gentleness! Assuredly, it can cost me nothing to give myself entirely to Him, or at least to desire to do so with all my heart; for I cannot yet flatter myself that I have effectually made this sacrifice. Experience alone can prove this. The truth is, that I should believe myself to be the most ungrateful and miserable among men, if I were to keep back anything for myself. I see that is absolutely necessary I should belong to Him entirely, and that I can never consent to any compromise. It remains to be seen whether I have strength and constancy, practically, to act up to this right conviction. I am very weak; it is impossible I should do so of myself; I feel that what I say is true. If I am faithful, my God, Thine will be the glory; and I do not think it will be possible for me to attribute anything to myself.

In the second meditation on the Love of

God, God, as it seems to me, filled me with this truth, and enabled me to see it clearly—First, that He is in all creatures; and secondly, that He is Himself all that is good in them; and thirdly, that He is the Giver of all the good we receive from them; and I seemed to perceive this King of Glory and of Majesty occupied in giving us warmth in our clothing, refreshment in the air we breathe, nourishment in our food; in rejoicing us with sweet sounds and pleasant sights, in producing within me all the impulses that are necessary to make me live and act. How wonderful! What am I, O my God, that Thou shouldst thus minister to me, at all times and in all things, with such unwearied assiduity, with so much love and care? He acts in the same way in all other creatures; but all for me as a zealous and watchful steward, who employs everything, and makes everyone work in the service of his prince. More wonderful still, God does all this for all mankind, though few give heed to it, except some holy and elect souls; but for myself, I feel constrained, at least, to remember it, and to be grateful. Further, I imagine that as God's own glory is the end of

all His works, these things are principally done through the love He bears towards those who acknowledge Him in them, and who admire His goodness, who are thankful to Him, and learn to love him better. Other men receive the same things, as it were, by chance or by good fortune; something in the same way as when a feast is spread or a concert given in honor of one person, and a thousand others enjoy the same pleasure, because they are in the company of the person for whose sake it has been done. Hence God said to St. Teresa, that if He had not made the world, He would create it for the love of her.

In the third meditation, I considered that the services God renders us through creatures, should keep us always humble and recollected. When it is a servant who attends upon us, we often receive his service whilst we are occupied in doing something else,—we converse with others, we fall asleep; but if a person of quality were to stoop to wait upon us, it would certainly keep us wide awake. *Domine, tu mihi lavas pedes?*—“Lord, dost thou wash my feet?” This is marvellous to any one who begins to understand, however imperfectly,

what God is, and what we are. He unceasingly applies to our benefits, the being, the life, the properties of all created things in the universe. This is His employment in nature; ours must be to receive all that He sends us from every quarter, and to offer Him in return thanks and praise, acknowledging Him to be the Author and Creator of all things. I have promised, my God, to do this so far as I am able. The exercise of the presence of God is of wonderful benefit; but it must be considered a singular gift of God, when it is persevered in with that sweetness without which it would become hurtful. I simply ask of God His love and His grace, and that love for Him which is more solid than conspicuous or full of consolation. I have promised, with the help of His grace, never to begin any action without recollecting that He is witness to it, and that it is He Himself who performs it with me, and who gives me all the means to accomplish it; never to finish any action without the same thought, offering it to Him as His own, and in the course of the action, every time that the same thought suggests itself, to pause for a

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time and renew my desire to please Him. As regards these words: *Amorem tui solum*—“Thy love alone,” I feel that I am willing to go through my whole life deprived of any, even spiritual consolation. I am content to serve God faithfully, be it in dryness or even in the midst of temptation.

To receive as I ought what I am aware my nature shrinks from, I must remember that if this should be my portion, I have asked for it from God; that it is a great sign of His love, and that I have much reason to hope for everything from His goodness. It will confirm me in the sweet hope that all that has happened to me hitherto, has been arranged for me by a special Providence; I, therefore, vow to accept it as I should do whatever would be most agreeable to me in the world, without betraying to anyone my natural inclinations.

*Absit mihi vel gloriari, vel lætari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Mihi autem pro minimo est ut à vobis judicer, aut ab humano die; qui autem me judicat Dominus est.* “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “To me it is a very small thing to be judged

by you, or by man's day; He that judgeth me is the Lord."

To live each day for the day.

To hope to die in the fulfilment of the present duty.

Those who are really humble are never scandalised because their own weakness is perfectly known to them, and they feel themselves so near the precipice, and fear so much for themselves, that they are not surprised when others fall. "Where is the honor of preaching, if it does not please God that I should do so," said the blessed Alvarez; "and what is there vile in the meanest occupation, if I please God in following it?" At whatever cost, we must please God.

It is strange how many enemies we have to contend with from the very moment we resolve to become saints. It seems as if all creation were unchained against us: the devils with their cunning, the world with all its allurements, and human nature with the resistance it makes to our good desire, the praise of the good, the derision of the wicked, the solicitations of the lukewarm. If God visits us, vanity is to be feared; if He with-

draws from us, scrupulosity and despair may follow upon the greatest fervor. Our friends tempt us through the deference we have been accustomed to show them; indifferent people through the fear of displeasing them. Indiscretion is to be feared in fervor, sensuality in moderation, and self-love everywhere. What then can be done? *Non est aliis qui pugnet pro nobis, nisi tu Deus noster. Nescientes quid agere debeamus, hoc unum habemus residui, ut oculos nostros dirigamus ad te.*

Above all, as sanctity does not consist in being faithful for a day or a year, it is most necessary that God should be our buckler, and a buckler to shield us on every side; because on every side we shall be attacked. *Scuto circumdabit te*—“He shall compass thee with a shield.” God must do all, and so much the better that there is no fear of His failing in anything. As for ourselves, we have only to acknowledge our insufficiency, and to be constant and fervent in asking for help through the intercession of Mary, to whom God refuses nothing; but even this we cannot do without great and multiplied grace from Him.

It seems to me, that I have, through the

mercy of God, gained somewhat in strength against the temptations to vain-glory. The same objects present themselves, but much less vividly; they do not make so much impression upon me—they begin to weary, pall upon me, and to lose their charm. Those reasons which prove their vanity, have much more influence over me than heretofore. This has been especially the case since I made a sincere determination to renounce them entirely, by every efficacious and infallible means. This resolution was fully formed in my mind, and I should, through the grace of God, have carried it into execution the very next day, if I had not been advised to the contrary. *Quando benè erit sine illo, aut quando malè cum illo?*

If we should feel, when we are engaged in prayer, a kind of restlessness, making us think the time long, and almost impatient to go on to some other occupation, we may very profitably say to ourselves: “Is it possible, O my soul! that thou art wearied of thy God,—that thou art not content with Him? Thou possessest Him, and dost thou look for something else? Where canst thou be better

than in His company? Whence canst thou gain greater benefit?" I have felt, from experience, that this will calm the spirit, and unite it to God.

As perfection consists in seeking to please God in all things, and to please God alone, I am more than ever convinced that there must be no hesitation in cases where we can please God, although we may displease man, and gain some merit in His sight, by losing a portion of man's esteem. This is the reason why I have resolved never to hesitate, on any occasion that offers, to humble myself, and to make me known to men as I really am, and have been. There would be no difficulty if God gave me grace to remember this truth, that those who are lightly esteemed among men, are so much the more highly esteemed by God; and that it is God alone I desire to please. If I were even to be looked upon as worthless, and this reputation were not to increase my merit, I ought to be indifferent to it, since I do not look for any reward from man; but if it should bring me nearer to God, it will be a great gain. I also perceived that it is a great blessing to belong

wholly to God, because of His infinite majesty. God bestows great honor upon us when He calls us to be saints. I learned this by comparing Him to a king who chooses one among his subjects to be his exclusively, who will not suffer him to share his service with another, and who will have his undivided love, and so much the more if the prince himself be of exalted merit.

We love the king, although we have never seen him, and may never see him; although he loves us not, and is ignorant of our feelings towards him; although he does not know us, and if he did would make no account of us. And God whom truly indeed we do not see, but whom we shall see through all eternity, who sees us, who loves us, who is good to us, and who knows all our thoughts,—cannot we love Him?

We love the king because he is our master; and is not God our Master also, and moreover our Creator and our Father?

If God reigns within us, there will be perfect obedience, everything will be done according to the least of His commandments, and nothing will be done but by His order.

Further, we shall try to please Him in everything: we shall study His inclinations, anticipate His wishes, and do always, and in all things, whatever we imagine will best please Him. The homage paid to a king has these two characteristics—a blind submission, and an extreme deference: let us act thus towards God, and do always what pleases Him, and moreover pleases Him best.

The grace of God is a seed which we must be careful not to choke, and at the same time not too rudely to expose; we must cherish it in our hearts, and not be over-ready to lay it open in the sight of men. There are two kinds of grace, which seem little in themselves, but on which, nevertheless, our perfection and our salvation may depend. 1. A light which reveals to us any truth must be cherished carefully; great heed must be taken that it be not extinguished through any fault of ours. We must make use of it as a rule in all our actions and observe whither it would lead us. 2. An impulse which moves us at certain times to perform some good action; we must be faithful to these inspirations, because on this fidelity our very salvation may sometimes de-

pend. A mortification which is suggested by God on any particular occasion, if listened to and accepted, will, perhaps, produce great fruit, and tend greatly to our sanctification. On the other hand, to neglect this small measure of grace, may lead to fatal results, as has been the case with many favorites who have fallen into disgrace with their sovereign, by failing in compliance in little things.

Having felt vexed at a little mortification which came upon me unexpectedly, I felt very much ashamed; because it showed me how little love I have for the Cross; so much so, that I have reason to believe that all the desire I have from time to time experienced, to suffer both sorrow and humiliation, has been superficial, or that I have not looked upon these sufferings with a simple view to God and to the Cross of Jesus Christ. When I was still in this great trouble, our Lord, in His infinite mercy, even made of my ingratitude an occasion to bestow more grace upon me; my Lord, I repeat, caused this great sorrow to be followed by an illumination which made me understand that to love the Cross is the first step which is pleasing in His sight, and that I have

still to begin, for I am far from sharing in the spirit of the saints, who rejoice in every opportunity of suffering which God grants them. What cowardice in the sight of our Lord to murmur at any little mortification He may send us! These thoughts have given me a strength which I had not before, to endure all that may come to me, and even to seek for occasions which may not occur of themselves.

It seems to me that this has cured me of a certain kind of timidity and delicacy, which has made me apprehend, among other things, the severity of the weather, and cling to certain indulgences which I may easily relinquish without seriously endangering my health. May the infinite goodness of God be eternally praised, who, far from punishing my faults as they deserve, works for me out of them so great a treasure of grace.

*O bona Crux!* On St. Andrew's Day I was much touched to see the saint prostrate himself at the first sight of the cross, unable to restrain his joy, which broke forth in such passionate words as *good*, *useful*, *honourable*, and *lovely*. It is his only good—the only good on which his heart is set. *Diu deside-*

**rata**—Long desired; not only long, but ardently, anxiously loved. Hence the time of waiting seemed long to him. *Diu sollicité amata*—Long, eagerly, solicitously loved. Love cannot be without solicitude; and this saint sought for the Cross with the eagerness and anxiety of a man who feared not to find it, who could never find it soon enough. Thus, as soon as he meets with it, he is like one who has found a rich treasure; he gives way to all the transports of a passionate lover. *Sine intermissione quæsita*—Sought unceasingly. Here is the very spirit of our rule, and by this did he deserve to find it. And *Aliquando*—At last. This word expresses an intense desire. He must have loved Jesus Christ exceedingly, to find such pleasure in the Cross. We often love men for the goods which they possess; but to love their sufferings and miseries for the love of them is a thing unheard of; it is much if we do not hate them on account of their miseries. *Majorem charitatem nemo habet quam ut animam ponat pro fratribus suis*—“Greater love no man hath, than that a man lay down his life for his friends”; but there are degrees in this sacrifice, and to die with this

joy, this eagerness, is unparalleled love. What faith does it bespeak!

The Feast of St. Francis Xavier.—This saint spoke of God on all occasions, and with every kind of person. His first thought, wherever he might be, was, what service can I render to my neighbour? There are a hundred different ways of bringing men to God, of which preaching is sometimes the least successful. No one ever conversed with Berchmans without feeling his heart burn within him. Let us, at least, nourish this zeal for each others edification. Whatever may be the theme of our conversation with世俗人, let us at least talk like Jesuits in our recreations. I speak little of Thee, my God, because, alas! I think of Thee little, and love Thee little.

We might do much by our example, like Berchmans, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and Brother Alphonso Rodriguez, by our modest demeanour towards strangers and servants; by our regularity and consistent practice of every virtue. Am I not, on the contrary, a stumbling-stone to others? If they were to follow my example, would there be either regularity or mortifica-

tion in the house? It is no thanks to me that our community is not an assemblage of relaxed and self-indulgent men.

We may do much by our prayers and good works. Preaching is useless without grace, and grace is only to be obtained by prayer. St. Francis Xavier always began by prayer; witness that whole Lent which he passed in such dreadful austerities as brought on a month's illness, to obtain the conversion of three profligate soldiers. Could he have done anything without prayer? Many preachers have succeeded him who have preached no less than he; but what has been their measure of success? There are so few conversions among Christians, because though many preach, few pray. How acceptable to God are prayers for this intention! It is like asking a mother to forgive her son.

The obedience of St. Francis Xavier is most admirable. A journey of six thousand leagues is proposed to him, and he is ready to set forth as soon as the word is spoken. Saint Ignatius simply says to him, "You are to go," and he hesitated not a single moment. He is to quit friends, parents, country, to go forth

alone to another world. He required no arguments to induce him to obey. He goes at once, without preparation, without books or other provision for the journey. Is it thus that I obey? am I ready to do so? am I commanded anything more difficult? I have made a vow of obedience. He was not yet under vow. Do not my superiors speak to me with the voice of God?

He obeys with joy. He throws himself at the feet of St. Ignatius, happy that the choice has fallen on him, and thanks him for the obedience. It is an opportunity of gaining great merit, and he believes that God speaks to him by the lips of Ignatius. And we murmur if we are commanded to do anything difficult or contrary to our inclinations, we do it grudgingly, we think that our superior deals hardly with us, and feel annoyed and irritated with him. Yet we ought to consider such an obedience as a grace; for if we obey only when the command pleases us, we do it because it pleases us and not because we are commanded;

He submits his judgment. What shadow of reason could there be for recalling to Eu-

rope the apostle of the Indies, the pillar of the faith in one-half of the world, and that at the very moment when he was upon the point of entering China at the peril of his life? There was no reason; neither did he expect any. But we, when we are in a place which seems to suit us, when we think we are doing good, in an employment in which we are successful, in a house where we are useful, what do we not find to say against a command which summons us elsewhere? Here is the test of our obedience, whether we can recognise the hand of God acting against all human reason, for reasons unknown to us but most beneficial to us. The misfortune is we cannot trust Him. This air, this superior, that occupation! Go in the name of God: *Omnem sollicitudinem vestram projicientes in eum quoniam ipsi est cura de vobis.*—“Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you.”

St. Francis Xavier accounted himself unworthy to obtain anything of God by his own prayers; he employed the merits of St. Ignatius, the intercession of his brethren, and those of little children. He thought himself a great sinner, and laid to the account of his own sins

the obstacles which hindered the propagation of the faith, and that out of a true feeling of humility. What a miracle is humility in so great a man! but is not pride a greater miracle still?

What have we done in comparison with him? What a difference of our way and his of viewing the same things! What a subject of confusion to us is this difference, and if, notwithstanding it, we still can nourish vanity, what a subject of deeper confusion still!

He held others in high estimation, St. Ignatius, those who wrote to him from Europe, other ecclesiastics; he was considerate towards all men, spoke to them with admirable gentleness and sweetness, served them, rendered them the most humble offices. We have no right to despise any one. An humble man sees no faults but his own; it is a sign of great imperfection to remark the imperfections of others. He who is imperfect to-day may, if he discern and acknowledge his own imperfections, rise in a few days to a high degree of sanctity. Besides, our Rule obliges us to regard all other men as our superiors.—*Inde honor, reverentia, prompta ad serviendum uni-*

*cuique voluntas.*—“Hence honor, reverence, a ready will to serve all men.” When we know ourselves to be very worthless, we do not take it ill that others despise us; because we see it to be just; and therefore did St. Francis Xavier receive the contempt and insults of the Bonzes not only with patience, but with joy, never being moved to anger with them, but replying to them with the utmost sweetness. A poor beggar is not troubled at being refused, neglected, fed with the refuse of all things. An humble man, whatever bad treatment he receives, believes that it is only his due. Men do not esteem him; they are right, they agree on that point with God and the angels. A man who has deserved hell, believes that he well deserves to be despised on earth.

*Mirabilis Deus in Sanctis suis, magnificus in sanctitate.*—“God is wonderful in His Saints, wonderful in holiness.” It is not St. Francis Xavier, whom I admire; it is God, who makes such great things of a man; who does such great things in a man, such great things for a man. That is to raise him to so high a degree of sanctity, to give him so great

a gift of contemplation, to work such wonderful conversions and stupendous miracles by His means. This seems to give me an exalted idea of God, and to impress me with the great glory of being permitted to serve Him. Strange that the service of so great a Master should be neglected, that so few are willing to devote themselves entirely to Him! What a miracle are these conversions, which would naturally have been so difficult, wrought in so short a space of time by a poor ill-clad stranger, travelling alone and on foot, and ignorant of the very language of those to whom he preaches. This man changes the manners and religion of kings, learned men, nations of one-half of the world, in the course of ten years; of tribes separated by distances so vast, that it would have seemed impossible to traverse them in so short a space of time. I conceived a great desire for the conversion of these lost souls. I prayed to God, that if it were His will that I should carry the light of the gospel to them, He would vouchsafe to open a way to me; if not, that He would form for Himself laborers fitted for a work of which I feel myself to be wholly unworthy.

I felt impelled to labour to make God known and loved on all occasions or by all means within the reach of my weakness, sustained by the grace of God, fortified by the examples of this great saint and his powerful intercession with God; for I said to him, if your zeal was so great for the conversion of unknown barbarians that you went to seek them in the ends of the earth, can you reject one of your brethren—will you neglect the care of his salvation? Help me, great Apostle, to secure my own salvation, and I will omit nothing to further the salvation of others.

Suddenly a bright light seemed to dawn within my soul. I imagined myself loaded with chains and fetters and dragged to prison, accused and condemned, because I had preached Jesus crucified and dishonored by sinners. I, at the same time, conceived a great desire for the salvation of those unhappy souls who are in error, and I felt that I would willingly shed the last drop of my blood, to deliver one single soul from hell. What bliss for me, if at the moment of my death I could say to Jesus Christ: Thou hast shed Thy blood for the salvation of sinners, and I have

prevented such and such a one from rendering Thy blood-shedding fruitless to himself? But what shall I say, if while laboring to convert others, I remain unconverted myself? Shall I toil to people paradise, and go to dwell in hell? No, my God, Thou art too good to suffer this to be! Thou wilt help me to work out my salvation; Thou wilt strengthen me in the labors by which I desire to win heaven. Am I to die by the hand of an executioner, or to be dishonored by some blighting calamity? My whole frame shudders, and I feel horror-stricken at the thought! Will God account me worthy to suffer some great thing for His honor and glory? I see no probability of it; but should God vouchsafe me this privilege, I will embrace His good pleasure, whatever it be—prison, calumny, shame, contempt, sickness, whatever He wills. I know not whether I deceive myself, but I feel as if God were preparing sufferings for me: send them to me, then, dearest Saviour; obtain them for me, great Apostle, and for all eternity I will praise God, and thank you for them. *Beati eritis cum vos oderint homines et vos persecuti fuerint.*—“Blessed shall

you be when men shall hate you and persecute you." Send me these sufferings, then, O Lord! and I will bear them joyfully.

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, I resolved to abandon myself so entirely to God—Who is always in me, and in Whom I always am and live—as no longer to concern myself about anything, whether exterior or interior, but to rest peacefully in His arms, fearing neither temptation nor illusion, neither prosperity nor adversity, nor my evil inclinations, nor even my faults, hoping that He will so order all things by His infinite goodness and wisdom, that they may tend to His glory; to desire to be neither loved nor befriended by any one, but to have Him alone for father and mother, brother and friend—for all who might bear me love or tenderness. It seems to me that I should dwell sweetly and safely in such a shelter, and that I should have nothing to fear either from men or devils, or from myself, or from life or death. If God will but suffer me to rest there, I shall be but too happy. I feel as if here I had discovered the secret

of peace, and that hereafter I have no cause to fear any of the things which I have hitherto dreaded in the spiritual life.

Why was such exquisite purity required of Mary? Because she was to be the tabernacle of the Son of God. If she had not been purer than the angels, her womb would have been no fit habitation for the Word made flesh. He could not have entered there with joy, nor could He have brought with Him those precious gifts with which He enriched her at the moment of His conception. In the holy Sacrament of the Altar we receive within ourselves the same Jesus Christ whom Mary bore for nine months within her womb. What is our purity? What care do we take to prepare our soul? What slovenliness! what faults do we commit on the eve, on the day—in the very sacred action itself! Yet He comes to us! what goodness! We come to Him! what boldness! *Exi a me, Domine, quia homo peccator sum.*—“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” But does this God of goodness come to us with joy? Let us consider what His sentiments must be. Must He not shrink from the sight of such corrup-

tion. Yet we come to Him boldly, impudently—without contrition, without repentance. I will try to prepare my heart, O my God, that Thou mayest find pleasure and take delight in it, that I may not place any obstacle in the way of the immense graces which I should receive if I took care to purify myself, if I but knew what I lose by want of preparation. But, O my God, my ignorance is a poor excuse for my negligence. Do I not know what courtesy requires of me in my intercourse with other men. Besides what I have learned and sucked in, I may say, with my mother's milk, how much time and pains have been wasted in after-life in learning to please those who, the next moment, will laugh at me for my trouble; and I have scarcely given a serious thought to what I should avoid in order not to displease Thee. What am I saying—a serious thought of what I owe to Thee. Have I given a thought to it at all? What do I expect, ungrateful and faithless as I am, that Thou shouldst think of me? And when hast Thou ever failed to do so? Shall I go on till I force Thee to think of me no more? Alas! my dearest Saviour, regard

not my perverseness; I have given Thee too many reasons to forget me, to despise me, or to remember me, only to cast me into hell. Thou hast not done so, O God of all goodness; I give Thee thanks, and will strive for the future to pay Thee more worthy homage. I will prepare myself by carefully purifying my heart, to profit by Thy visit to me, and to make them pleasing to Thyself. Come, then, O my God, and by the help of Thy holy grace, Thou shalt find my heart made pure and clean to receive Thee; but if once it obtains favour in Thy sight, take possession of it Thyself, great God, lest creatures return and rob Thee of it again. I will never willingly suffer it; for I desire to belong wholly to Thee; but I fear myself more than my most formidable enemies. I trust wholly in Thee.

I will say: *Omnia possum et audeo in eo qui me confortat*—“ I can do all things, I dare do all things, in Him that strengtheneth me.” As I was reflecting yesterday on what had almost shaken my resolution, I discovered that I had not yet stifled my vain fear of men, and that though, through Thy infinite mercy, O my God, I have, by the aid of Thine Almighty

grace, escaped many dangers into which it might have led me; I see clearly my own helplessness and misery, and I feel that it is Thou alone who workest all good in me. I should offend Thee every moment, and that most grievously, if Thou didst not stretch forth Thine hand to draw me out of the mire into which my natural inclinations would plunge me, and in which my over-great facility would keep me enslaved, if Thou didst not exert Thy sovereignty over creatures for my deliverance. But what thanks do I owe Thee, O my God, for all Thy favours bestowed upon me! Ungrateful, unworthy of them as I am, I will praise Thee, my most loving Saviour, and proclaim aloud, that Thou alone deservest to be loved, served, and praised. To establish me in this truth, Thou hast taught me that human respect causes us to do evil for fear of displeasing men, to omit doing good for fear of not pleasing men, and to do good in order to please men. I perceive, in fact, that for fear of displeasing men, we give without permission, we break silence, we listen to murmuring and detraction without informing our superiors of it, as we are bound to do. Strange, indeed,

that we choose rather to draw down upon ourselves the wrath of God than to wish exciting the anger of a man, *cui similem me fecisti*—"whom Thou hast made like to me." A man, like myself, preferred before God, notwithstanding all His threats and promises. Oh sorrow and shame! What do I expect from this man? What do I fear from him? In religion we cannot fail) to have many good desires; but strange to say, the fear of man often hinders us from carrying them into execution. What will be said if I play the rigid, devout, mortified religious? I have entered upon a certain way of life: if it were to begin over again I would act differently; but I should pass for a bigot. I would do this or that if I dared. *Qui me erubuerit coram hominibus, &c.*—"He who shall be ashamed of Me before men," &c. And of St. Frontina, it is said: *Ita timebat Deum ut ab hominibus timeretur*—"She so feared God as to be feared by men." Shall I have less fortitude, wisdom, and resolution, than blessed Ximenes, who, when about to enter the Society of Jesus, made this vow: *Promitto tibi, Deus meus, nihil me acturum quod non sit amoris*

*tui causa. Ego enim nescio quo eam ut alicui serviam nisi tibi qui es Deus meus ac Dominus meus.*

Unless we are on our guard, we lose the greater part of our life in our desire to please men. Under what obligation are we to them? what good do we expect from them? We are more unhappy and miserable in this respect, than those who are toiling to make money. And what a mistake do we make! These men, whom I vainly fear in religion, expect of me the very virtue which I am afraid of practising before them, and account me a fool and madman when I fall short of it. They know that I left the world to become virtuous, devout, and mortified, and they see that I am not so. This is a fool, say they, who is missing his aim. If he wished to live after this fashion, why did he not remain in the world, where he might have been without sin, what he cannot be in religion without peril of his soul? This is the opinion formed of me by those whose opinion I fear. Am I not very unhappy, my God, to displease Thee without pleasing men? If I were to do as much for Thee, Thou wouldest judge me favourably, and men would not despise my

conduct as they do now; for, after all, every man of sense esteems virtue, whether he himself practises it or not.

When I consider my inconsistency I tremble lest I be of the number of the reprobate. O my God, what misrule, what caprice! Now I am gay,—now sad; to-day caressing all whom I meet with,—to-morrow a porcupine, whom no one can touch without being wounded. This is a sign of great imperfection, a token that nature still reigns supreme, and that our passions are in no degree mortified. A truly virtuous man is always the same. If I do right, at times only, it is rather from caprice than virtue. A man who leans upon the unchanging God, said F. Caraffa, cannot be shaken. Whatever adverse circumstances may befall him, he is content; for he has no will but the will of God. O blessed state of peace, what battles must be fought before we reach it!

I acknowledge, O my God—for my own experience has taught it me but too sensibly—that we are good one day and bad the next,—that we relax insensibly. Why am I not now what I was in my Noviciate? Do we think

that we have done enough already to win God and heaven? Do we compare our merits with those of the saints? We have received many new graces since the days of our Novitiate, which call for fresh returns of gratitude; we are nearer death, we have grown more reasonable, more enlightened. Why is it, then, that we have changed for the worse, that our advance in reason has caused us to relax in fervor? The slightest temptation makes me forget my good resolutions. What care do I take to provide against the occasions of sin; how do I bear myself when they arise?

The Feast of St. John the Baptist.—St. John, although innocent, passed his life in continual penance. This is the spirit of Christianity. We should be in the continual practice of this virtue, because we have sinned. Had we sinned but once, we know not whether God has pardoned us; and did we know it, St. Peter and St. Magdalen wept over their sins even until death. I have deserved hell—I have crucified my God; this ought to keep me humble, and to nourish within my heart a holy detestation of myself. I sin daily—even

in the holiest actions of my life there is always something which deserves the fire of purgatory; therefore is the frequent exercise of contrition most necessary, and most beneficial to me. St Ignatius examined himself after every one of his actions. I commit more faults than he did, and scarcely ever think of doing so. What blindness is this!

I am always in danger of sinning. Oh! miserable condition of this life, how bitter does the thought of this danger render it to all those who love God, and who know the value of His grace! but how sweet does it render penance and mortification, which are such effectual means of warding off the peril, by subduing the flesh, repressing nature, cutting off the occasions, and removing the allurements of sin! Sweet penance! holy penance!

The consideration of the virtues of our brethren ought to fill a heart which possesses a true spirit of charity with exceeding joy, that they have these virtues and that God is glorified in them: *Non gaudet super iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati*—“ He rejoiceth not because of iniquity, but rejoiceth because of the truth.” Do we feel grudgingly

towards them? We ought, on the contrary, to praise God, to give Him thanks, to pray for their perseverance and perfection. This is the way to have our share in all the good they do in their confessions, their mortifications, their missions, and sometimes even a greater share than themselves, because of our disinterested charity. "You are jealous," says St. Augustine, "that your brother is more mortified than you. Rejoice in his mortification, and thenceforth it is yours." No, my God; I am not jealous of the virtues of my brethren. *Soror est, crescat*—"It is our sister; let her grow." I humble myself, on the contrary, and take shame to myself, when I compare myself with them. There are few in whom I do not perceive some excellence which I do not myself possess. They may have their defects; but for the most they are involuntary, and a sinner such as I am ought scarcely to remark them, but excuse them and keep my eyes fixed upon my own. Their virtues are, generally speaking, genuine. This should lead me to humility, reverence, and charity. Is it thus with me? Alas, for my pride! it is far otherwise. Kindle in my heart, O God,

instead of the baleful fire of jealousy, a holy envy, which may lead me to imitate them and benefit by their example. They will rise to condemn me at the last day; now they should excite and encourage me. They are visible patterns which God gives to me to follow, and cannot I do as they do? The example of the saints of old ought to touch us less sensibly than that of our brethren, which we have daily before our eyes. I see in them a wonderful self-restraint with a temperament of fire; the practice of the most crushing humiliations in men of the most distinguished birth; extreme austerity and mortification in constitutions of natural delicacy and feebleness. What a cause of confusion to me to see such an example of humility in persons of quality, of austere mortification in bodies so delicately nurtured; and I do not learn from it to become more perfect! God is in the midst of us, and we do not seem to recognise Him. He is in our brethren, and He desires to be loved, served, and honoured in them; and He will recompense such service more abundantly than if it were rendered to His own person. How do I bear myself towards them? Do I

love and honour all my brethren? If I except but one, I prove that it is not Jesus Christ whom I behold in them—that I do not recognize His presence there. If I love them, it is for their own sake, in order to be loved and regarded by them, or because their cast-off character is like my own. Let each of us behold in his brother our Lord Jesus Christ. He is in the midst of us in the Blessed Sacrament. What blessedness to dwell in the same house with Jesus Christ! but would not anyone suppose that we were ignorant of our privilege? Do we visit Him often, do we go to Him in our wants, do we consult Him on our plans, do we take our little troubles to Him, instead of taking counsel with our friends, murmuring and complaining?

*Medius vestrum stetit*—“He stands in the midst of you.” God is in the midst of us, or rather we are in the midst of Him. Wherever we are, He sees us, He touches us; when we are in prayer, or at work, at table, or in conversation. We think not of this, or with what fervour and devotion should we perform all our actions! If, when engaged in prayer, study, or any other occupation, I know that a

superior's eye is fixed on me unseen, how should I behave myself! Let us make frequent acts of faith in the presence of God, saying to ourselves: "God is here, He is looking at me;" and never do anything when alone which we would not do before the eyes of the whole world.

On Christmas-day, I had a clear and delightful perception of the excellence of those acts of virtue, which were exercised by the Blessed Virgin at the birth of her Son. I admired the purity of that heart, and the intensity of the love with which it burned for her Divine Child; for though it surpassed, in ardor and tenderness, all the natural love of all the mothers who have ever existed, the strength of the human love in no degree lowered the sanctity of that which was divine. I seemed to see the very movements of that heart, and felt ravished at the sight.

From the vigil of Christmas, I have been full of a very consoling thought, which has led me frequently to exercise the following acts, which have been accompanied by great sweetness:—

Of Joy in the thought, that throughout the

Christian world, the greater part of the faithful are engaged in promoting the glory of God, and in the care of their own salvation; especially holy persons, fervent and religious, and some elect souls in the secular state, who live after a very peculiar manner, and who spend the vigil and festival of Christmas in particular, in exercises of piety: the air seems to me embalmed with their devotion, and to bear a sweet and grateful perfume of mingled virtues to heaven:

Of Thanksgiving, for all the favors bestowed by God upon these holy souls, and upon all Christians in general;

Of Supplication, that it would please God to purify and enkindle their sacrifice and mine.

Thou comest, O God, to bring us this sacred fire, and desirest Thou but that it be kindled, and that all the earth be set on fire by it? All Thy faithful servants labor ardently and constantly to merit some few sparks of it, and Thou wilt reward their holy labors.

For my part, O God of mercy! I ask for no reward; for what have I ever done which deserved a recompense? I ask of Thee only,

O Almighty God! who hast annihilated Thyself for me, treat me not with severity, but pardon my unfaithfulness for the sake of the good which is done by my brethren, who serve Thee so religiously; or if my weakness and my wanderings have estranged and irritated Thee, punish me in this world. I have a body which is good for nothing but to suffer; make it feel the full weight of Thy justice. I will not complain, but in the extremity of sickness and calumny, in shame and captivity, I will praise Thee with the three children of Babylon; I will praise and bless Thee, well assured that if Thou hast the goodness to punish me in this world, Thou wilt spare me in the next.

I felt within myself a great desire to imitate the fervor of the holy religious and fervent Christians, who spend these days in continual communication with their humbled God, to offer to Him some heroic mortifications, in order to keep myself in union with the Infant God; and was so possessed by this thought, that I had a difficulty in admitting any other, and even committed several incongruities from being so absorbed in it. Thou

art very good, O my God ! to reward thus liberally the sacrifices I have imposed on myself; cease, my Sovereign and loving Master, thus to load me with Thy favors; I acknowledge myself to be unworthy of them. Thou wilt accustom me to serve Thee from interest, or I shall fall into some excess; for what would I not do but for the obedience which Thou bidst me render to my Director, to merit one moment's enjoyment of Thy consolations? Fool that I am—did I say merit? forgive me, most loving Father, my mind wanders under the excess of Thy goodness, and I know not what I say—can I merit these ineffable graces and consolations with which Thou dost encompass me? No, my God, it is Thou alone who, by Thy sufferings, hast obtained from Thy Father all the favors which I receive; be Thou eternally blessed, therefore, and do Thou overwhelm me with suffering and miseries, that I may thus have a share in Thine. I shall never believe that Thou lovest me till Thou hast made me to suffer much and long. I have committed the fault, is it just that the child should bear the servant's punishment?

Never was purity greater than Mary's in giving birth to Jesus. She brought Him forth without the slightest injury to her inviolate virginity. Neither stain nor soil blemished the sanctity of His nativity. It is thus that His ministers should bring forth the Infant Jesus in the hearts of men. It sometimes happens that we soil our own souls while we purify the souls of others. It is, indeed, a kind of miracle to see a man lose nothing of his humility and sanctity in the exercise of zeal for others, and seek nothing therein but God alone.

God had suffered us to fall into an abyss of miseries, in order to have an opportunity of testifying His love to us. But our wretchedness, great as it was, fell far short of the excess of His zeal. A single drop of blood would have sufficed to heal us: His love could not be content with so small a thing; He poured the last drop in His veins. This was not necessary for the cure of our ills, but it was needful for the manifestation of His love.

I feel consolation in contrasting the opinions of men, who esteem and account us to

be something, with the judgment of God, in whose presence we are mere atoms, to whom we are in no way necessary; who can do without us as easily as if we had never existed; who can do perfectly well without our aid all that He designs to do, who has a thousand servants, more zealous, more faithful, more pleasing in His sight; who can, in one moment, form an infinite number of others still more fitted to do His work, or who can make use of the most miserable of men to accomplish His most sublime purposes.

What a marvel will it be, most adorable Lord, if Thou shouldst, some day, vouchsafe to make use of my weakness to deliver some poor wretch from the jaws of death. If it needs but a good will, I will it with all my heart. True, to make saints one should be a saint, and my many and great defects show me but too plainly how far I am from sanctity. But, O my God, make me a saint, and spare me not in the making. If only Thou wilt make me good, I care not at whatever cost.

Upon this truth, that there is a God, and that God is an absolute Being, who can lose

nothing, acquire nothing, who contains all things in Himself, who is the source of all things, who depends upon no other being whatsoever, either for being or for well-being, I was penetrated with the deepest reverence for this incomprehensible greatness. It seems to me that I never so well understood the nothingness of all created things as when contrasting them with this idea.

The Angels, the greatest Saints, the Blessed Virgin herself, and the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ, which have nothing of themselves, which depend in all things upon God, all seemed to me nothing in comparison with God. My astonishment was great when I reflected that God being thus great and thus independent, deigns to think of men, to listen to their prayers, to requite their services, to note their faults.

It is like a great king taking thought of an ant-hill. Though He should condemn us, annihilate us, all without any other reason but His own will and pleasure, it would be only as if a man were to amuse himself by killing flies and ants.

But my amazement ceases when I consider

that He is as good, merciful, and beneficent, as He is great. It is true, that He is an abyss of greatness, but He is also an abyss of mercy; and this encourages me to hope in Him, to venture to approach Him, to speak to Him. But for this thought it seems to me that I should not dare even to think of God. I will think of Thee, O my God, not that I may know Thee; for in order to know Thee, we must not cling to earth, and I feel how much my heart still cleaves to human things; so many desires to be esteemed, loved, and praised, though all the glory and praise is due to Thee alone. So much love of my own ease and convenience makes me sigh; for when I think myself most secure from the snares of self-love, I find that it has already surprised me and made a dupe of me, to my shame and confusion. Open my eyes, then, most loving Jesus,—*Domine ut videam*—“Lord, that I may see.” I ask not to see Thee or to know Thee; give me only light to see myself; for as soon as I shall learn to know myself, I shall infallibly know Thee.

*Noverim me, noverim Te*—“Let me know myself, let me know Thee.” I cannot

know myself without coming to know Thee; my imperfections will give me an ardent desire to know something better than the creature; and what can that be but the Creator? *Ad te omne desiderium meum*—“ All my desire is unto Thee.” All things beside are displeasing to me, and myself more than all beside; because I know nothing more abominable, contemptible, and miserable than myself.

This view of the greatness and independence of God, on the one hand, and of the nothingness of all creatures on the other, has revealed to me the baseness and vileness of those who place their dependence on men, and the generosity and blessedness of those who depend only upon God. There is but one way to deliver us from the miserable nothingness in which we are, and that is to cleave to God. *Qui adheret Deo unus spiritus est*—“ He who cleaves to God is one spirit.” We thus raise ourselves from the dust and become in some sort like to God.

In thinking of the Spirituality of God, I considered how it is that God, who is all spirit, can be tasted, heard, seen, embraced by the

spiritual senses. This view consisted in a strong interior conviction of the presence of God, which faith renders, as it were, sensible to the soul, so that she has no doubt of it, nor does she even need to reason with herself in order to convince herself of it.

I felt a great desire to mortify my exterior senses, the unregulated use of which are the only obstacle to the soul's exercise of its spiritual sense. *Animalis homo non percipit ea quae sunt Spiritus Dei.*—“The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God.” I am not surprised that carnal men know little of God; for God is a spirit, and in the carnal man the spirit is dead or at least mortified.

The Simplicity of God appears to me most admirable. That nature which excludes all composition of parts, whether essential, or integral, or accidental, which is all things, and yet is but one thing, which is its own existence, in which are comprehended all its wisdom, goodness, eternity, power, &c. I picture to myself a flower possessing the odors of all other flowers. It might be possible to form a composition in which these different odors should be united; but it would be wonderful

if they were all found in a single one, in all their parts and in the greatest perfection; if a fruit had the flavor of all other fruits, a precious stone, the colors of all other stones, and a plant all the qualities of all other plants. *In te uno omnia habentes non debemus dimittere te*—“Possessing all things in Thee alone, we ought not to leave Thee.” I felt myself incited to imitate this simplicity of God, to give to Him alone a place first in my affections, loving none other but God; and it is easy to do this; for in God I find everything which I could love elsewhere, and thus, in the words which Scripture applies to God, my love will be *Sanctus, unus, et multiplex*—“Holy, one, and manifold.” But my friends love me, and I love them; Thou seest this and I feel that I do so. Must I, O my God, sacrifice them to Thee who art the only good, since thou dost wish me to be wholly thine; I will make this sacrifice, though it will be a harder one than the first one I made for Thee, when I left my father and mother. I, therefore, offer Thee this sacrifice, and I offer it with a willing heart, since Thou dost forbid me to give a place in my affections to any creature. Re-

ceive then this sharp sacrifice, and in return be Thou their friend, my divine Saviour, in my stead, in the same manner as Thou wilt take their place in my affections; I shall remind Thee daily of them in my prayers, and of all that Thou hast engaged to do for them in making Thyself my substitute; I shall importune Thee in such a way that Thou wilt make them see and feel the great advantage which they derive from the command Thou hast given me, to have no other friend but Thyself. Be Thou, then, their friend, Jesus, the truly true friend! Be Thou mine, since Thou dost command me to be Thine.

*Si oculus tuus simplex fuerit, totum corpus lucidum erit*—“If thine eye is single, thy whole body will be full of light.” Let me seek God only, not even the goods, the graces, the advantages which there are in His service, as peace, joy, &c., but Himself alone. Frequent change of place and employment is an excellent means of obtaining detachment of heart; for we insensibly attach ourselves and take root, as appears by the grief we feel when a separation comes. To leave a place where we are known, and where

we have some friends, is a sort of death. I shall be enabled to bear this separation without sorrow, by the thought that God will be with me in every place, and that wherever I go I shall find the same Lord; and this is a point upon which I never change. It is the same God to whom I pray here, who knows me and loves me, and whom alone I wish to love.

*Qui solus habet immortalitatem*—“Who only hath immortality.” God alone is immortal. All besides die—kings, our relations, friends, those who esteem us, or whom we have obliged, are divided from us by death or absence, or we part from them, and the remembrance of our benefits, esteem, friendship, gratitude, all dies with them. The persons we love die, or at least, beauty, innocence, youth, prudence, speech, sight, &c.,—all these die in them. The pleasures of sense have, so to say, but a moment of life; God alone is immortal in every way. As His nature is absolutely simple, he cannot die by the separation of the parts which compose it; as He has no need of support, He cannot sink by the subtraction of any sustaining power. Moreover, He can never go away or change. Not only will He always

exist, but He will remain always good, always faithful, kind, glorious, liberal, amiable, powerful, wise, and perfect in every way. The pleasure we feel in possessing Him, is a pleasure which never passes away, it is unchangeable; it depends neither on time nor place, it never causes disgust, but, on the contrary, becomes more delightful the longer we enjoy it.

God is perfect in every sense of the word. It would be impossible to find anything in Him, which is not infinitely good. He is wise, prudent, faithful, good, liberal, kind, gentle, despising nothing which He has created, taking care of us, governing us with tenderness, and even with consideration. He is patient, and free from all irregular movements of the passions; and in Him is centered all which we love in creatures, only in an infinitely more perfect manner. He has none of the defects which offend, irritate, and are repulsive to us in created beings. How is it then, that we do not give Him our undivided love? What can justify this weariness of Him? When we have once found something pre-eminently excellent of its kind, we cannot bear anything inferior. After hearing a fine,

well-modulated voice, we feel a great aversion to bad singing; a connoisseur in pictures, who has studied the originals of Raphael and Titian for some time, does not deign to cast his eyes on the works of other painters. When we have lived in well-bred and polite society, we cannot accustom ourselves to less-refined and unintellectual conversation.

Not only is God perfect, but he is, moreover, the source of all perfection, which is to be found in Him alone, and it can only be attained by learning to know him and by meditation. *Similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est*—“We shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is;” this will be in heaven, and in this life we shall approach nearer to this likeness in proportion as we meditate upon it. We have a special obligation to perfection; because the imperfections of a man who makes profession of piety, and teaches it, do more harm to his neighbour, than his virtues will do him good; they make people think that there is no such thing as real holiness; that perfection is impossible, and that it is only an illusion or a name. If imperfections do not give rise to

these thoughts, at least they encourage the slothful to believe that they may give way to them, and yet be saints at the same time. It is quite enough to lull an imperfect man asleep, and keep alive in his heart some darling passion, if he has observed the least shadow of it in a man who has a reputation for goodness; for he then thinks himself at liberty to gratify his self-love, and that he shall not be less a saint in doing so.

As I meditated on the Eternity of God, I represented it to myself as one immovable rock on the banks of a stream, whence the Lord surveyed all the creatures who passed by without ever moving from the place himself. All those men who were attached to created objects appeared to me like people who, carried away by the current of the stream, would lay hold, some of a plank, some of the trunk of a tree, some of masses of foam, mistaking it for something more solid. All is carried away by the torrent; friends die, health declines, life passes away, and borne on these slight supports we reach the ocean of eternity, in which we are engulphed and lost. Then we discover how unwisely we have acted in not

clinging to the rock, to the Eternal One; we would return, but the waves have carried us too far away, we cannot return, and we must inevitably perish, with the things which perish. It is very different with the man who clings to God: let what will happen to him, he sees without fear the danger and the loss of all others; whatever changes may come, he always finds himself on his rock—he cannot lose God, to whom alone he has attached himself; he is always absorbed in Him; adversity only teaches him to rejoice at the good choice he has made. He always possesses his God; the death of friends, of relations, of those who esteem and court him; absence, change of place or employment; age, sickness, death,—nothing can take aught from him of his God. He is always equally happy, saying in the peace and joy of his soul: *Mihi adhaerere Deo bonum est, ponere in Domino meo spem meam*—“It is good for me to cling to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God.” I was much affected by this thought, and it seemed to me that I understood this truth, and that God was pleased to give me such a conviction of it, that it inspired me with great

courage and readiness to detach myself from creatures, and to seek God only, all my life, in whatever duty He should call me to, never showing either preference or aversion, blindly receiving all the employments which my superiors give me; and should it sometimes happen that they give me a choice, I promise Thee, my God, and by Thy grace I hope to keep this promise,—should it happen, I say, that my superiors allow me a choice, I promise to renew the vow which Thou hast inspired me to make: always to choose the employment and the place to which I feel the greatest aversion, and in which, before God, I firmly believe I shall have the most suffering. Thou hast given me this example, my beloved Jesus, and, as far as in me lies, I wish to be guided by Thy example, by Thy precepts, which alone will lead me to Thee, and preserve me from all the ignorance and error into which I might be drawn by my passions.

A RETREAT  
OF THE  
REV. FATHER LA COLOMBIÈRE,  
MADE IN LONDON IN THE YEAR 1677.

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NOTICE.

THOSE who take the trouble to read the following retreat, might find themselves perplexed, if I did not give them the points of the memorandum of which Father la Colombière speaks on the third and fifth day of this journal of his Spiritual Exercises.

This memorandum was given him, when he left France to go into England, as preacher to her Royal Highness the Duchess of York. The Father, knowing the wisdom and piety of the person who gave him this paper, kept it carefully. I have thought it necessary to give in this place three notes, copied, word for word, from the original, without a single addition:—

1st. The particular talent of Father la Colombière, is to win souls to God; and for

this reason the devil will direct all his efforts against him; even persons consecrated to God will oppose him; and will not approve of what he says in his sermons to convert them; but the goodness of God will support him in his crosses, in proportion as he trusts in Him.

2ndly. He must have a tender compassion for sinners; and never have recourse to severity, except by the special direction of God.

3rdly. Let him take great care never to draw goods from their source: this is a short saying; but it contains a great deal, which God will enable him to understand, if he applies himself to it.

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I find myself at the present time in quite a different frame of mind to that which I was in two years ago. Then fear possessed me entirely, and I felt no zeal for work, being apprehensive that I could not avoid the snares of active life, to which I saw that my vocation called me. Now, this fear has vanished, and all my inclinations lead me to work for the salvation and sanctification of souls. I seem to wish to live only for this, and only to love

holiness as an excellent means of gaining many hearts to Jesus Christ.

It appears to me, that the reason I find myself in this disposition is, because I no longer feel such a love of vain-glory; and this is a change which God alone could have wrought in me. I am not affected by brilliant employments as I uscd to be. I seem only to seek to save souls; and those I find in villages and obscure places are as dear to me as others. Indeed, I owe it entirely to the mercy of God, that the praise and esteem of men do not affect me as they once did, though I am still but too sensible to them. But formerly I was so troubled with this temptation that I lost all courage, and even almost despaired of saving my own soul while occupied with the care of others; so that had I been free, I should, doubtless, have passed my days in solitude.

A few words spoken by N. N. first helped to remove this temptation; for when I was told that while he was praying to God for me, our Lord had given him to understand that my soul was very dear to Him, and that He would take a particular charge of it—

“ Alas !” I replied “ N. N., how, judging by what I feel in myself, can this be? Can our Lord love a vain creature like myself—one who only seeks to please men, and to be esteemed by them, and who thinks so much of human respect.” “ No, no, my father, you are not all that you describe yourself to be,” was the answer. In truth, these few words calmed me; and in proportion as I began to think less of these temptations, so they began to grow weaker, and less frequent.

But two things above others contributed to give me this desire of working for the salvation of souls: the success which it pleased God to give to my feeble endeavours at N., and what N. N. said to me on my departure and which I had put down in writing; and from what I remark daily, I have reason to think that people have not been mistaken in their opinion.

The thought that God has made me wholly for Himself, seems to raise me above creatures, and to give me a freedom and liberty which brings great rest to my soul, and a fervent desire to devote my life to His service. I would wish, if it were possible, never to oppose the will of God. I feel in myself

an ardent wish to follow all His inspirations, especially since I have been told by a person, who has intimate communications with God, that our Lord had given him to understand that I had been opposing His will in a matter about which I hesitated, through fear, as it seemed to me, of not acting prudently.

On the third day of my exercises, I perceived that the first point of the paper which had been given me on my departure for London, and which has since been confirmed by a letter I received two months ago—I perceived, I say, that it was but too true; for since I left Paris, the devil has laid five or six snares for me, which have greatly perplexed me, and from which I was only freed by an especial grace, and not till I had committed several weaknesses. I do not know how it happened that I did not foresee the trouble which these things would cause me, not that there was any positive harm in them, but it was a matter in which I doubted which side I ought to choose; and my natural inclinations were so strengthened by the temptations of the devil, that they prevented me from seeing what was the most perfect,

or, at least, hindered me from embracing it, so that I remained in great perplexity and anxiety, which, thanks be to God, ceased when our Lord was graciously pleased to show me the truth, and cause me to embrace it.

On the fifth day, if I mistake not, God gave me to understand this point of the memorandum which I brought from France. Let him take great care not to draw goods from their source; this is a short saying, but it contains a great deal, which God will enable him to understand if he applies himself to it. It is true, I had often examined these words to draw goods from their source without being able to understand them; but at this time having observed that God was to give me the perception of them, according as I should apply myself to the study of them, I meditated on them a long time, without coming to any other conclusion than the following, that I should refer to God all the good which He should work through me, because He is the sole source of it; but after having, with some difficulty, diverted my thoughts from this consideration, all at once a light darted into my mind, by the help of

which I clearly perceived, that it was the solution of the doubt which had troubled me during the two or three first days of my exercises, on the subject of the use which I ought to make of the money paid for my pension. I have understood how important this saying is, because it leads to the perfection of poverty, to great detachment from all vain-glory, to the strict observance of rules, and that it is the source of great peace, both interior and exterior, and of very edifying conduct, whereas by following another course, however ingeniously I might have excused it to myself, 1st. I should have departed from the perfection of poverty. 2ndly. I must have applied for unnecessary dispensations. 3rdly. I should have gratified vain-glory and self-love, by indulging in delicate food. 4thly. I should have exposed myself to external cares which would have given me a great deal of occupation. 5thly. I should have run the risk of scandalizing the people of France, and giving them a love of the world, and I should, at least, have deprived those in England of a good example. 6thly. I should have been exposed to all the thorns which usually accom-

pany avarice; and I began to be very uneasy about it. But what I find so admirable in all this, and it shows me how good Thou art, oh my God! is that Thou gavest me the grace to engage myself by vow to follow this counsel before I understood it. I cannot express the joy and gratitude, the trust in God, and the courage this vow has given me. There were some points yet remaining which I had included in this vow because they were very remote; but now, if it please God, I am at peace in this respect for the rest of my life. Praised many thousand times be God, who in this way has deigned to manifest to me His mercy, and the holiness of the person through whom He has been pleased to give me this advice.

I have also found in the second article, a remedy for a temptation which has troubled me much since I have been here. It has shown me clearly the line of conduct I ought to have observed with regard to a person whose proceedings displeased me. I do not know how it happened that I did not understand this sooner; but God be praised, who has at length given me the apprehension of

it. This paper has just contained all the rules which I needed to enable me to elude the snares of the devil; there only now remains one point which God will permit me to put in execution when it shall please Him; I place all my trust in Him.

On the sixth day, as I considered the particular vow I had made, I felt my heart overflow with gratitude towards God, who has given me grace to make this vow, which I had never before had so much time to reflect upon, and I felt overjoyed to find myself bound by innumerable chains to do the will of God. The thought of so many strict and binding obligations had no ways alarmed me, because it seemed to me that God had given me an assurance that in making these engagements I was accomplishing His will, and that He would assist me to keep my promise. It is quite evident, that without a special protection it would be almost impossible to keep this vow; I reserved it with all my heart, and I hope, by the grace of God, never to break it.

I have remarked, to-day, the seventh of my retreat, that though, during the course of it,

God has bestowed many graces on me; they have not, for the most part, been in the time of prayer, during which, on the contrary, I have experienced more difficulties than usual. I do not know if this has not arisen from the fact of my having tried to confine myself to the ordinary points to which I have scarcely any attraction; it seems to me I could have passed hours without fatigue or exhaustion in considering God about me and within me, supporting and sustaining me, in praising Him for His mercies, in arousing in myself sentiments of confidence, in desires of giving myself to Him without reserve, and of rooting out all self-love, in endeavours to glorify Him and to cause others to glorify Him, in seeing my own inability and the great need I have of assistance from above, in attending to all that God may demand, either as regards myself or persons with whom I may be concerned, and yet when I wished to consider a mystery, I was forthwith tired and my head became fatigued, so that I may say I never felt less devotion in prayer. I have thought that it would not be amiss for me, for the future, to follow the same course as hitherto, to continue

to unite myself to God, present by faith, and afterwards by acts of those other virtues to which I should feel myself most drawn. It seems to me that this manner of prayer is not subject to illusion; because it is a truth that God is in us, and that we are in Him, and that the knowledge of this presence gives us a great motive for reverence, confidence, love, joy, and fervor, especially as the imagination has no share in the work of representing to ourselves this truth, in which we only make use of the light of faith.

On this the eighth day, I think I have found a great treasure, if I know how to make a profitable use of it, and this is a firm trust in God, founded on His infinite goodness, and the experience I have that He never fails us in time of need. Moreover, I find in the memorandum which was given me when I left France, that He promises to be my strength in proportion as I trust in Him. For this reason I am determined to set no bounds to my confidence in all circumstances. It seems to me that for the future, our Lord will be to me as a shield, which will protect me from all the assaults of my enemies. O my God! it is

Thou then who wilt be my strength, Thou wilt be my guide, my director, my counsellor my patience, my wisdom, my peace, my justice, and my prudence. I will have recourse to Thee in my temptations, my desolations, my dryness, in my weariness, my heaviness, and my fears, or rather, I will no longer fear either the illusions or the artifices of the devil, or my own weakness, or my indiscretions, or even my distrust, since Thou wilt be my strength in all my crosses, Thou hast promised in proportion as I trust in Thee; and oh, my God! how greatly to be admired are thy ways! for while Thou makest this condition, it seems to me that Thou givest me this confidence. Mayest Thou be eternally loved and praised by all creatures O my dearest Lord, what would become of me if Thou wert not my strength? But since I am assured Thou art so, what would not I do for Thy glory? *Omnis possum in eo quime confortat*—“I can do all things through Him who strengtheneth me.” Everywhere Thou art in me and I in Thee; therefore, in whatever place I may be, to whatever dangers and enemies I may be exposed, I have my strength with me. This

thought is sufficient to dissipate in one moment all my troubles, and especially some impulses of nature, which at times return with such force, that I cannot help trembling for my perseverance, and I shudder at the sight of the perfect detachment to which God is pleased to call me. All the texts of Scripture which speak of hope comfort and strengthen me. *In te Domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum. . . . In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam, quoniam tu Domine singulariter in spe constituesti me. . . . Diligem te Domine fortitudo mea. . . . Dominus firmamentum meum et refugium meum. . . . Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea, quem timebo. . . . Laus mea et fortitudo mea Dominus—* “In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded. . . . In peace in the self-same: I will sleep and take my rest, for Thou only, O Lord, hast established me in hope. . . . I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength; The Lord is my firmament and my refuge. . . . The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom then shall I fear. . . . The Lord is my strength and my praise. . . .” He shall also be, if it so pleases Him, my reward. /

At the end of this Retreat, being filled with confidence in the mercy of God, I have made it a point with myself, that I endeavour in every way in my power to perform all that my adorable Master has commanded with respect to His precious Body in the holy Sacrament of the Altar, in which I believe Him to be really and truly present. I am touched with pity for those deluded persons who refuse to believe this great and ineffable mystery; and in those countries where people make a boast of disbelieving Thy real presence in this august Sacrament, I would willingly give my life to convince them of this truth, which I believe and profess. I feel much consolation in making several times during the day acts of Faith touching the reality of Thy adorable Body under the species of bread and wine.

My heart is filled with emotion as often as I endeavour to make acts of Faith touching the truths of the Church of Rome, the one only true Church, and out of which there is no salvation to be found. At these times, I repeat it, my heart overflows with sweetness, which I enjoy and experience by the mercy of God without being able to explain it.

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How good art Thou, my God, to communicate Thyself with so much condescension to the most ungrateful of Thy creatures, and the most unworthy of Thy servants. Mayest Thou be eternally blessed and praised !

I have felt that God wished me to serve Him by endeavouring to accomplish His will, respecting the devotion which He has revealed to a person to whom he often communicates Himself, and for which he has deigned to make use of me as His weak instrument. I have already taught it to several persons in England, and I have written to one of my friends in France, begging him to establish it in the place where he is; it will prove of the greatest utility there, and from the great number of holy souls in that community, I believe that the practice of it in that holy house will be very agreeable to God.

O my God ! would I could proclaim in all places what Thou dost expect from Thy friends and Thy servants.

God having then disclosed Himself to this person, who from the great favors He bestows on her, there seems every reason to believe must be pleasing to Him, she addressed herself

to me, and I obliged her to put down in writing what she had told me, as I wished to note it myself in the journal of my retreat, since God wishes to make use of my feeble services in the execution of this design.

“ While I was praying before the Blessed Sacrament one day of its octave,” writes this holy soul, “ I received from God excessive graces of His love. Feeling myself moved with the desire of making Him some return and of giving love for love, He said to me: You cannot give me a greater mark of your love than by doing what I have already so often asked you. And disclosing to me His Divine Heart, He said: ‘ Behold this heart, which has loved men so much, that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself, to manifest its love for them, and in requital I receive from the greater part of mankind nothing but contempt, irreverence, sacrilege, and cold neglect of my presence in this Sacrament of love. And what is more revolting still, those who hate me thus are hearts consecrated to me. Therefore, I ask of thee that the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi be dedicated to

a special feast in honour of My Sacred Heart, to make reparation, by a communion for that intention, for all the indignities which I have received while exposed upon the altar; and I promise thee that My Heart shall expand to shed abundantly the influence of its divine love upon all those who shall pay it this honour.'

"But, O Lord, to whom do you speak? to a miserable creature and poor sinner, whose unworthiness is sufficient to hinder the accomplishment of Thy design, Thou hast so many generous souls to execute it. 'Are you then so ignorant,' He replied, 'as not to know that I make use of the weaker instruments to confound the strong, and that it is in the little and poor in spirit that I show my power with the greater splendor, in order that they may attribute nothing to themselves.' Do Thou then, replied I, give me the means of doing what Thou commandest. Then He added: 'Address yourself to My servant N., and tell him from Me to do all he can to establish this devotion, and cause this joy to My divine Heart; let him not be discouraged by the difficulties he will meet with,

of which there will be no lack; but let him know that he is all-powerful who mistrusts himself entirely and trusts only in Me."

It seems to me that in this Retreat, which I conclude to-day, the lights which God has been pleased to give me have been briefer, but clearer, than in former times. The abiding feeling of my heart has been a desire wholly to forsake and forget myself according to the counsel given me, as I believe, on the part of God, by the person whom He has made the medium of many graces to me. It seems to me that I have had glimpses of what constitutes that perfect oblivion of self, and of the state of a soul which no longer reserves anything from God. That state which has so long affrighted begins now to attract me, and I hope, by the grace of God, to endeavour to attain it. I often find myself indulging feelings contrary to this entire abandonment of self, and this causes me great confusion.

When I am quite myself, I feel, by the infinite mercy of God, in a liberty of heart, which gives me unspeakable happiness. It seems as if nothing could make me unhappy. I feel no attachment to anything whatever at

these moments, although in the course of the day I, perhaps, experience the movements of nearly all the passions, but a moment's reflection suffices to calm them.

I have often felt great interior joy in the thought that I am in the service of God, feeling how much better this is than all the favour of kings. The occupation of people in the world seems to me most contemptible, when compared with what is done for God.

I feel myself raised above all the kings of the earth by the honor of belonging to God. I seem to feel that the knowledge and love of Him is better than a kingdom, and though I have sometimes thoughts of ambition and vain-glory, it is certain that all the glory of the world without this knowledge and love, would have no power to tempt me. I feel deep compassion for those who are not content with God, though they may possess all that they desire beside Him.

I have discovered again, and am daily discovering, fresh illusions in what I account to be zeal, and I feel a great desire to purify, more and more, that with which God inspires me, and which I feel to increase day by day.

I have also felt great confusion in looking back at my past life; a very firm and clear persuasion of the little, the nothing, we contribute to the conversion of souls, and a very distinct perception of my own nothingness. I see the necessity of producing, with great circumspection, and very great humility, and self-distrust in the direction of souls, and in our own spiritual guidance, and of being very careful to detach ourselves from the over-anxiety which we feel naturally to make great progress from a feeling of self-love. This subjects us to many illusions, and may, perchance, lead to many indiscretions. The love of humility, of abnegation, of an obscure and hidden life, is the great remedy for all these evils. We compare ourselves unconsciously and very absurdly with the greatest Saints, and we do, from very impure motives, what they did from the pure impulses of the Holy Ghost. We want to do in ourselves and others in one day, what cost them years to accomplish; we have neither their prudence, their experience, their talents, nor their supernatural gifts; in short, they were Saints, and we are very far from Saints, and

yet we have the presumption to think that we can do everything that they did.

There is no peace but in perfect forgetfulness of self. We must resolve to forget even our spiritual interest, in order to seek the pure glory of God alone.

I feel a continually increasing desire to devote myself to the exact observance of my rules. I take great pleasure in the practice of them, and the more perfect my fulfilment of them, the more do I seem to enter into perfect liberty. This yoke, certainly, is no constraint upon me; but, on the contrary, it enables me to walk with greater freedom. I account this to be the greatest grace which I have received during the whole course of my life.

My misery, in one respect, is greater than I can express. My imagination is wild and extravagant. All the passions contend for the possession of my heart, and scarcely a day passes without their exciting some disturbance there, occasioned sometimes by zeal, sometimes by imaginary objects. It is true, that, by the mercy of God, I suffer all this without, in any great degree, contri-

buting to it, and without consenting to it; but I am continually catching these foolish passions, trying to agitate this poor heart; this self-love flies from corner to corner, and always finds some hiding-place. I feel great compassion for myself, but I do not put myself into a passion. I do not lose patience. What should I gain thereby? I ask of God to make known to me what I should do to serve Him and to purify myself; but I am resolved to wait patiently until it shall please Him to work this miracle; for I am well convinced that it can be wrought by Him alone. “*Qui potest facere mundum de immundo conceptum semine, nisi tu qui solus es.*” If only I can go to God with great simplicity and great confidence, I am but too happy. O my God, grant that this thought may be ever present to my mind.

It seems to me that I have a great desire to do right, that I know how do it, and that I shall only fail from want of reflection; but this reflection is a great grace from God, which I ask most humbly of Him.

*Simplicity, confidence, humility, entire resignation, no reserve, the will of God, my rules.*

These are the words which never present themselves to my mind without bringing with them light, peace, liberty, sweetness, and love.

I know no greater joy than to discover in myself some hitherto unperceived infirmity. I have had this pleasure several times during this Retreat; and I shall have it again, as often as it shall please God to communicate His light to me in the reflections which I make upon myself. I believe firmly, and I have great joy in believing, that God leads those who commit themselves to His guidance, and that He takes charge of the least thing concerning them.

I feel every day an increasing devotion to St. Francis of Sales; and I beseech our Lord to give me grace often to remember that great saint, in order to invoke and imitate him.

OFFERING  
TO THE  
SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHRIST.

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I make this offering in honor of that Divine Heart, which is the abode of all virtues, the source of all benediction, and the safe retreat of all holy souls.

The principal virtues which I ought thus to honor are first, the most ardent love of our divine Lord for God His Father, together with His most profound reverence and incomparable humility: secondly, His infinite patience in suffering; His extreme sorrow and contrition for the sins which He had taken upon Himself, thus uniting the most tender filial confidence with the shame and confusion of the most grievous sinner: thirdly, His most keen compassion for our miseries, and His unbounded love of us, notwithstanding all these miseries, and notwithstanding the intensity

of all these feelings, every one of which existed in the Sacred Heart in its highest possible degree; His unchanging equanimity, arising from a conformity to the will of God, so perfect as to be incapable of being disturbed by any event, however apparently adverse to His zeal, His humility, and even to His love, and to all the other perfect dispositions of that Divine Heart.

That Heart is still the same; ever burning with love to men, ever open to shed down upon them every kind of grace and benediction; ever touched by a sense of our ills; ever eager to impart to us a share of its treasures, and to give to us itself; ever ready to receive us, and to be to us a shelter, a dwelling-place—a paradise even here below.

In return for all this, He finds nothing in the heart of men but hardness, forgetfulness, contempt, and ingratitude. He loves, and is not loved. Men even know not His love; because they will not condescend to receive the gifts by which He would prove it, nor listen to the secret and loving whispers by which He would win their hearts.

In reparation, O most adorable and loving

Heart of my most loving Jesus! and to avoid, as far as may be, a like misfortune, I offer to Thee my heart, with every movement of which it is capable. I give myself wholly to Thee, and from this hour I protest, as I believe in all sincerity, that I desire to forget myself and all that belongs to myself, in order to remove every hindrance to my entrance into that Divine Heart, which, in Thy goodness, Thou dost open to me, and into which I desire to enter, to live and die there with Thy most faithful servants, all inflamed and consumed with Thy love. I offer to Thy divine Heart all the merit and all the satisfaction of all the pious practices; all the actions of zeal, of humility, obedience, and of all other virtues which I shall perform to the last moment of my life. This shall not only be all in honor of the Heart of Jesus, but I beseech Him also most humbly to accept the entire donation which I make of it to Him, to dispose of it as it shall please Him, and in favor of whomsoever He pleases; and as I have already given over to the holy souls in Purgatory all the satisfaction which I may be able to make to the Divine Justice by any

of my actions, I desire that it may be distributed to them according to the good pleasure of the Heart of Jesus.

This is not to prevent me from fulfilling the obligation which holy obedience lays upon me, to say Mass and to pray for certain intentions, or from saying a Mass out of charity for the poor, or for my brethren and friends at their desire; but, as I shall then be making use of what does not belong to me, I intend that, as is most just, the obedience, the charity, or other virtues which I shall thus practise, shall all belong to the Heart of Jesus, whence I have derived the power to exercise them, and to which, therefore, they will belong without reservation.

O most loving Jesus, teach me perfect forgetfulness of self, since this is the only way to gain admission into Thy Sacred Heart. Since all that I shall do in future will be Thine, give me grace to do nothing unworthy of Thee. Teach me what Thou wouldest have me to do, that I may attain to that purity of love which Thou hast inspired me to seek after. I feel in myself a great wish to please Thee and my utter inability to accomplish this, without

special light and assistance, which I can expect only from Thee. Do with me, Lord, what Thou wilt, I feel that I am a rebel to Thy will, but it seems to me that I would be so no longer. O Divine Heart of Jesus Christ, Thou canst accomplish all things, Thou wilt have all the glory of my sanctification if I become a saint; this appears to me as clear as the day; but it will be a great glory to Thee, and it is for this only that I aspire to perfection. Amen.

**FINIS.**









